

A BRIDEGROOM, A BELT, AND A  
BLOODY HATCHET: THE ROLE  
OF PONTIAC IN EURO-INDIAN  
AFFAIRS, 1760-1769

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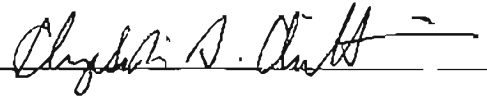
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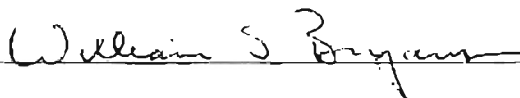
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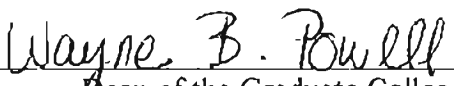
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## PREFACE

“My brothers, you are ignorant of the reasons which have induced me to act, although I have spared no pains to keep you informed of my sentiments.”<sup>1</sup> So stated *Obwandiyag*, who was called in the English tongue simply Pontiac, regarding the nature of his activities in the years 1760-1769. Though he was addressing his French allies, the Ottawa chief might as well have directed the same thought at historians who attempt to characterize his actions within the context of European warfare or limit his leadership to the confines of his own place and people. The role of Pontiac still waits to be analyzed apart from a context that reduces the Indians of the Great Lakes region to mere objects upon whom the European powers acted—much like the forests, mountains, and other physical obstacles encountered in the New World. Despite the presuppositions of many scholars of early America, Indian civilizations were not in decline. Neither were the Native Americans passive or purely reactive amid the waning days of the Seven Years’ War between France and England (1756-1763). Rather, the peoples of the Old Northwest comprised a distinct third party in the political affairs of the era and Pontiac became their most articulate and forceful leader.

Scholarship on the role of Pontiac diminishes his significance by focusing too strictly upon the territorial aspects of Euro-Indian disputes while failing to put into proper context the cultural dynamics at work. Modern scholars invariably react to the work of the nineteenth-century historian, Francis Parkman, and his account of the events relating

to the Ottawa chief. Parkman's interpretations are permeated with an obvious celebration of Manifest Destiny as it swept across North America and over its Native inhabitants. The Indians appear as degenerate souls resisting the righteous advance of a superior European culture with Pontiac being elevated to a sort of archetype for Native opposition. Tinged with racial assumptions, Parkman asserts that the Indians' "susceptibility... to superstitious impressions" produced recurring calls for spiritual revival, which really served as a façade for simple resistance.<sup>2</sup> With this dynamic being hardly unique among American Indians, in Parkman's opinion, genuine cultural considerations are dismissed as the embodiment of little more than Indian grievance, coupled to their primitive nature, then channeled by a charismatic leader, in this case Pontiac. According to this assessment, it was this war chief who fostered a grand conspiracy against white colonists. Within his own portrayal of a cultural clash which considers only its violent aspects, Parkman is rightfully accused of making Pontiac more prominent than those facts offered can sustain, as well as presenting an interpretation steeped in the outmoded "great man" theory of history.<sup>3</sup>

Howard H. Peckham attempted to rectify the dated aspects of Parkman's work. Most scholars view Peckham's piece as a more accurate analysis of the social climate around the Great Lakes as he contends that the clashes between English and Indian peoples resulted from Native grievances following the arrogant, if not abusive, practices of British authorities. While Pontiac was an important leader, he was merely one of many regional chiefs disputing the English presence in a particular tribe's given territory. But Peckham, like Parkman, downplays the cultural basis of Pontiac's ascension, specifically the pan-tribal nature of Indian activities during this period. Peckham

contends that Pontiac only “shrewdly recognized the power” of the religious and cultural trends among the tribes of the region.<sup>4</sup> The Indians’ dire economic situation was ready to produce an explosion of violence across the Old Northwest; thus, in Peckham’s account Pontiac’s actions are more the outgrowth of such instability in temporal affairs than the expression of any internal cultural dynamic.<sup>5</sup>

Thematic variations grew out of Peckham’s interpretation with historians emphasizing those selected aspects of the struggle they deemed most important. These historians have drawn out the regional nature of Euro-Indian conflicts, elevating the significance of events and trends above those figures associated with them, including Pontiac. Wilbur R. Jacobs focuses upon the practice of gift giving between the Europeans and Indians maintaining that these “‘presents’ [were] soothing medicine [that] tended to cause dissatisfied warriors to forget their grievances.”<sup>6</sup> He views Pontiac as a leader who manipulated Indian outrage after British officials ended the practice of gift giving at the close of the Seven Years’ War. Anthony F. C. Wallace stresses the “revitalization” of Indian religion in their attempt to retain some semblance of custom and culture. He argues specifically that a “syncretism”<sup>7</sup> between Christian and Indian myth comprised an effort to explain why the economic circumstances of Indian peoples were becoming so desperate. Thus the answer to their plight was found in a return to traditional ways. This was one of many disparate “nativist” movements lacking in any real continuity, thus Wallace continues to restrict Pontiac to the narrow confines of his own place and people. Finally, Richard White constructs a shared trade culture, a “middle ground,” between Indians and Europeans. This middle ground served to facilitate communication and maintain peace. The absence of the French following their

capitulation of land to England threatened their advantageous location on the physical and interpersonal middle ground between the competing European nations. So, the Indians rebelled in an effort to keep the British leadership within the confines of the shared trade culture. Taken as a historiographic whole, this recent scholarship on the role of Pontiac has replaced the “great man” theory of history with determinism, contending that forces greater than any of the people involved were moving to a critical point. Pontiac was merely historically fortunate in that scholars recorded his name, but even then he should only be discussed in a narrowly-defined tribal and territorial context.<sup>8</sup>

Some historians have recently begun to reconsider aspects of these interpretations and challenge the decidedly English slant that characterizes existing literature on Pontiac’s activities. Carl A. Brasseaux and Michael J. Leblanc focus their interpretation upon material relating to the leadership of New France. Pontiac becomes a critical component in an aborted French attempt to engage their English adversaries in concert with those Indians residing in America’s northern and southern regions. French assurances of joint military engagements, supplies, and reinforcements prompted Pontiac to begin assaults on British installations in the north, thus the Ottawa chief’s actions are seen as the product of French strategic ambitions. Conversely, Gregory E. Dowd offers an interpretation of the Indian wars as an attempt on the part of Pontiac to manipulate the leadership of New France in the Louisiana Territory. Playing off the concerns of the *habitants*—French colonials—who were made British subjects as a result of the surrender of France’s Canadian assets in Quebec, Pontiac aroused anti-British sentiment among all of the inhabitants of the Great Lakes region spreading rumors that the French king’s return was imminent. In truth, French leaders never desired to once again preside over

expressions that made sense when put into the context of an evolving association with their European counterparts. As events shifted, the players jockeyed for strong negotiating positions, and Pontiac alone managed to keep himself in the critical center of the balance of power between the Algonquins, the French, and the British. His efforts and importance are then best understood after seeing how he interacted with fellow Indians in the afterglow of a prophetic vision, what internalized cultural assumptions he utilized in negotiations with his own people or to others, and the evolution of his continuous association with the duplicitous English and more trustworthy French. With each of these points considered, it is evident that Pontiac used culturally-valid means to become a true Indian leader always aware of what choices would assure the most beneficial results for Native peoples. In so doing, Pontiac's leadership stands as the very embodiment of the hopes of Native peoples unified in their purpose to remain upon a land coveted by European powers vying for empire.

The methodology employed in this work is rooted in ethnohistory. Existing interpretations are limited in their research design by the exclusive use of documentary evidence. Increasingly diaries, letters, and other recorded personal observations from participants and witnesses involved in historical events are being incorporated to provide a wider perspective on events. Biases are inherent in works of this kind so care was taken to sift out subjective opinion from objective fact. It is my intention that through incorporating these perspectives a more complete understanding of historical events will result. But in an effort to compensate for inherent biases in subjective perspectives, care was taken to corroborate accounts, juxtapose the assessments of various witnesses to construct an accurate interpretation, and use them in conjunction with existing documents

to square perceptions with reality. Anthropological information about Indian societies is also used in this analysis. Such data, lacking in most of the existing interpretations of Pontiac's activities, explains the dynamics of those Native American cultures which formerly existed in the historiography only as a part of the backdrop upon which Europeans acted. By employing research on how and why Indian societies functioned as they did, a sort of historical subconscious of a people is constructed to serve as a means of explaining the process and legitimacy of Pontiac's ascension and activities, thus allowing a more accurate assessment and characterization of Native cultures. In short, an ethnohistorical approach explains the social and political interrelationship between the Europeans and Indians throughout the Northwest in a more complete manner without lapsing into a "frontier/white" or a "revisionist/red" bias.

The structure of this work consciously follows its title. After exploring the goals of the parties involved—French, English, and Indian—the focus is placed on the spiritual foundation of Pontiac's ascension. Pontiac served as a "bridegroom" who married his personal fortunes to the vision of the Lenapé prophet, Neolin, in 1762. There is no reason to discount the sincerity of the prophet's spiritual message. Indian theological trends that preceded Pontiac were just as complex in their development and sincere in their expression as Christian beliefs were among the Europeans of this era. Regardless of whether a prophet's vision was real, the people who believe him gauge their actions as though the revelation was genuine, thus perception becomes just as influential as reality. These new religious dynamics owed little to the influence of Christian myth as spread throughout the region by missionaries; rather the rituals of the various denominations adopted by the Indians served to facilitate the dissemination and comprehension of



Neolin's message. The vision thereby undercut all of the existing circumstances that kept the Native peoples apart: missionary influence, tribal allegiance, and alliances with European powers. The vision also afford Pontiac the opportunity to hold sway beyond the range of his own people and region, giving him cross-cultural legitimacy provided he demonstrated a capacity to conduct negotiations that produced tangible benefits between Indian converts and the European nations struggling for empire on Native land.

Many of the socio-economic aspects of Euro-Indian relations, which are often collectively referred to as grievances, are the focus of the second phase of this work. Through consideration of the culturally-based perceptions of the Europeans and Indians, I will show that Pontiac's activities amounted to much more than the simple expression of an aggrieved people. Genuine misunderstandings occurred between the parties involved, particularly English and Indian leaders. Focusing specifically on the themes of trade and settlement, I will show that Pontiac emerged as a collective mediator for the Great Lakes tribes. As the various peoples mixed in the west, collecting like beads for an Algonquin "war belt," the Ottawa chief adeptly used the language of religion to stitch together a coalition of tribes united in purpose. Pontiac demonstrated the ability to stoke or quell hostilities among his ever-increasing number of followers. As he articulated Indian concerns to his European counterparts, the activities of French and English officials only exacerbated problems by fostering arrogance among policy makers, increasing fear among European settlers, and creating an aggressive unity among the Indians. Pontiac maintained his personal centrality during this tenuous period, though cooled relations with the French and heated relations with the British slowly eroded the meager common

cultural ground he placed himself upon in his effort to speak on behalf of a Native coalition addressing European arrogance.

The third section as well as the conclusion of this work looks at Pontiac's failed efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the lingering British menace and maintain peace among the Indians and Europeans, culminating in his agreement to try France's "hatchet" upon the English. The Ottawa chief demonstrated his capacity to keep negotiating channels open despite constant cultural slights on the part of European officials. Ably playing both the British and French off one another to the Indians' advantage, Pontiac brought the parties to the brink of a peaceful resolution by means of shared cultural understanding and mutual benefit. But the Europeans resolved their own disputes in the Peace of Paris (1763) ending the Seven Years' War. The subsequent hostility of Europeans toward the Indians choked off all efforts to speak of peace between the victorious British and those Indians formerly allied with the French. In the wake of military engagements that stalled at Fort Detroit and Fort Pitt, Pontiac was reduced to a regional role. As he deviated from the common vision that united his followers, many tribes sued for a separate peace with the English to forestall any long-term difficulties. For his part, Pontiac continued to prolong the Anglo-Indian war on a smaller scale as he intermittently attacked and negotiated with English representatives. His significance can thus be seen in the absence of a stable social environment throughout the region until the year of his murder, 1769.

A closing note needs mention on the use of terms. Staying consistent with the desire to show Native Americans as active participants in the affairs of early America, every effort was made to forego the use of words containing the prefix "re-" as are

commonly used in existing interpretations such as “rebellion,” “revitalization,” and so on because they demonstrate Indian activities existing secondarily, if not subordinate, to the “real” concerns of European powers. Likewise, the classification “Pontiac’s War” is avoided outside of the narrow confines of the physical clash. Pontiac’s warfare comprises only one aspect of his role in Euro-Indian relations. It is my intention to show Pontiac, and by extension all American Indians, as more than the one-dimensional participants of America’s past as is often their portrayal in historical texts. Indians play a vital part in shaping America’s history and the view of Pontiac as solely an opponent of European settlement who was eventually eliminated fails to recognize how Indian relations, hostile or friendly, contributed to American ideals and the character of its people. Finally, specificity was essential when using the names of peoples and groups covered in this piece. Care was taken to employ those names that the Native American peoples used for themselves, though such an endeavor has become increasingly complicated amid the tendency for tribes to factionalize and the intellectual desire not to offend. The problem of European fragmentation only exacerbates this problem. The use of terms in reference to peoples and cultures is footnoted when clarification demands. Similarly, generalizations with regard to what comprises “Europeans,” “whites,” “Algonquins,” and so forth should be gleaned from the context of the term’s use and are never meant as a pejorative. Often they are used merely to avoid repetition. Please take the careful use of terms in this spirit of good faith.

Finally, I would like to thank those individuals who assisted me in the completion of this work. My sincere gratitude is extended to those members of faculty at Oklahoma State University who offered their constructive criticism during my tenure under their

instruction. First, my thesis committee: Professor Richard C. Rohrs, Professor Elizabeth A. Williams, and Professor William S. Bryans who offered me their guidance and encouragement, as well as altered personal schedules, to help me complete my studies. I would also like to thank Professor James L. Huston and Professor James F. Cooper for their feedback concerning portions of the piece as well as Professor Ronald A. Petrin for his overall help at this juncture of my academic career. Others who provided me with valued criticism of conceptual elements within the thesis also deserve recognition. They include Professor Mary Rowe of Central Missouri State University and Professor Gregory E. Dowd of the University of Notre Dame. I owe a special thank you to Professor Dennis Bozyk and Professor Richard Sax at Madonna University who gave me a solid foundation in academe and provided me with intermittent moral support along the way. A special note of appreciation goes out to the Solutions Center at the University of Notre Dame for rescuing of a desperate graduate student without a printer. And thanks to my fellow travelers in the graduate experience at Oklahoma State University who served as proofreaders and sounding boards for various elements of my thesis: John Blackburn, Dianna Di'Illio, Brad Duren, Jennifer Flint, Cindie Landrum, Rodney Mittlestedt, Stacy Reaves, Carrie Sikes, and Mark Van de Logt. Finally, my most humble acknowledgements go to my own Master of Life for whom I create as well as my grandmother, Ruby Smith, who has passed to me her Cherokee heritage by both blood and culture. She is the reason why I continue to pursue the study of Native American peoples, both my own and others. This has always been more to me than a simple academic endeavor. It has become a means of providing myself with a sense of

identity and a way to give some small voice to those whose lives are too often diminished to mere objects of some abstract historical debate. To my Grandma Smith, *Wa-Do!*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mary Agnes Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy, 1763 (Detroit: Speaker-Hines, 1912), 110.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Parkman, The Conspiracy of Pontiac, 2 vols. (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 1: 179.

<sup>3</sup> The legend of Parkman continues among scholars. His detractors have written numerous pieces concerning everything from his sources to his mental health. The latter seems indicative of the level of animus present during the deconstruction of his work. His work is dated. But his book was originally published in 1851. I would only offer that those historians who see need to vilify him would do well to keep criticisms based on the facts and interpretations as they might establish a precedent to use against themselves as their own work comes under scrutiny some years from now. See Wilbur R. Jacobs, Dispossessing the American Indian: Indians and Whites on the Colonial Frontier (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 83-93, 201-4; Robert Shulman, "Parkman's Indians and American Violence," Massachusetts Review 12 (1971): 221-39; Francis P. Jennings, "A Vanishing Indian: Francis Parkman Versus His Sources," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 87 (1963): 306-23; Louis Casamajor, M. D., "The Illness of Francis Parkman," American Journal of Psychiatry 107 (April 1951): 749-52.

<sup>4</sup> Howard H. Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising (New York: Russell and Russell, 1970), 101.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-102.

<sup>6</sup> Wilbur R. Jacobs, "Presents to the Indians as a Factor in the Conspiracy of Pontiac," Michigan History 33 (December 1949): 314.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 120.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-21; Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologist 58 (April 1956): 264-79; Jacobs, Dispossessing the American Indian, 75-93; Jacobs, "Presents," 314; Wilbur R. Jacobs, "Was the Pontiac Uprising a Conspiracy?," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly 59 (1956): 252-56; Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 269-71.

<sup>9</sup> Carl A. Brasseaux and Michael J. Leblanc, "Franco-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley, 1754-1763: Prelude to Pontiac's Uprising?," Journal de La Société Américanistes (Paris) 68 (1982): 59-71; Gregory Evans Dowd, "The French King Wakes Up in Detroit: 'Pontiac's War' in Rumor and History," Ethnohistory 37 (Summer 1990): 254-271. Dowd has also done work related tangentially to Pontiac in his dissertation and subsequent book. The focus of these endeavors is upon a quest for unity among the eastern woodland Indians with the role of prophets and religion viewed as the wellspring of such a desire. Since the emphasis is placed upon the prophet Neolin, whose contribution is discussed in my thesis, and Pontiac is only mentioned in passing, Dowd's work on this front was left out of the historiography related explicitly to the activities of the Ottawa chief. It is added here as a point of reference as well as to mention that it has contributed to the cultural context of my own interpretation of Pontiac's role in Euro-Indian affairs. See Gregory Evans Dowd, "Paths of Resistance: American Indian Religion and the Quest for Unity, 1745-1815," (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 1986); Gregory Evans Dowd, A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION—INDIAN SUMMER: THE ROLE OF PONTIAC IN EURO-INDIAN AFFAIRS

By the autumn of 1763 three things were known to the inhabitants of the Great Lakes region: the French were retreating to Louisiana, the British were advancing into the Ohio Valley, and the Indians of this region were experiencing the effects of having their embattled homelands made a coveted prize by foreigners. In an era guided by mercantile economic theory and aggressive national honor, European policy transformed territory into much more than a place to reside. Land was an asset. It meant money and prestige for those who managed to obtain it. And many of Europe's elites, religious and secular, felt that the land of America embodied the hope of the future. There was one sobering reality that awakened these colonizers from their imperial dreams, the presence of Native Americans who had no intention of surrendering a continent to peoples who already had one of their own. Pontiac became their spokesman.<sup>1</sup>

The clashes surrounding the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) showed signs of cooling between England and France by 1760 with the former taking a decisive position after the fall of Quebec and the latter trying to regroup in Louisiana. But hostilities were only heating up along the western frontier in North America, inspired by Native Americans who comprised an autonomous third body never made a party to the discussion of a pending cessation of war. Initially sporadic, hostilities between the

presumed English victors and their assumed Indian subjects became increasingly frequent as well as more organized. The peoples of the Northwest found in the British crown a common adversary and the antagonistic relationship was not simply a matter of Indian resistance. Many negotiations took place during the latter part of the 1750s through the pivotal year 1763 when British agents and representatives of the Great Lakes peoples came to the brink of an amicable agreement. But following French capitulation, the attitude of British officials changed as a result of their interpretation of the ramifications of Quebec's surrender.<sup>2</sup>

The Proclamation Line of 1763 provides ample evidence as to what British policy makers had planned all along for the crown's territorial prize as well as what they were going to do with its Native inhabitants. There were four objectives contained in this statement of royal will. First, the boundaries of three new British provinces in North America were defined. Second, a short-term restriction on westward settlement provided the necessary time to create stability for the crown's administrative and economic apparatus's construction. While the long-term plan of English occupation provided for crown officials to make inducements to encourage settlement of these lands by British subjects as well as non-British Protestants. Third, Indian trade was opened to all the people of the colonies, though under regulations never fully defined. And finally, an assurance was given to all the inhabitants of the Trans-Appalachian region that future settlement patterns would fall under certain strictures presumably designed to insure Native tribal integrity and honor old treaties. The inconsistency in the four goals was obvious. The first three goals disclosed England's desire to construct its administrative apparatus throughout the frontier, thus belying the magnanimous tone of the fourth

objective. Crown bureaucrats were taking an active interest in the affairs of settlers as well as the lives of Indians. While American colonists, in retrospect, saw the Proclamation Line as the starting point for their eventual revolution, the Native Americans inevitably saw it as politically devious, amounting to a tacit admission that territorial conquest and Indian subjugation were the Crown's ultimate goals.<sup>3</sup>

The Algonquins<sup>4</sup> were suspicious of English motives because they had already acclimated themselves to the French whose presence defined cultural life and expectations in the Great Lakes region. While initially holding to the notion best expressed in the Senecas' statement, "Is it not our land? ...you [the French] may go home directly off our Lands," the tribes eventually acquiesced to the amiable French explorers who established outposts among them.<sup>5</sup> The settlement patterns of the French snaked their way throughout Canada and down to Louisiana by closely following lakes and rivers. Trade was their primary motive and the waterways that flowed throughout the interior of the continent facilitated the travel of the French traders—the *Voyageurs* and *Coueurs du Bois*—establishing an elaborate trade network and far reaching empire under the *fleur-de-lis*. While the territory was vast, the population of French colonials remained comparatively small, resulting in a codependent relationship with the various Indian peoples. The French became adept at working the rituals of tribal culture and even shared some of their own, primarily religious in nature and brought over by French Jesuit missionaries who lived among the tribes attempting to create flocks but really serving the more useful purpose of fostering communication. The extent of French reliance upon Indian prowess was obviated during the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. The inability of officials to organize the disparate, and often mutually antagonistic, tribes to fight the

English hampered their efforts from the outset. France had learned that no matter how much they knew of Indian cultures there still remained some aspects of genuine misunderstanding.<sup>6</sup>

Such a level of cultural ignorance was even more demonstrable among the English. Those who implemented England's wartime policy had their own political struggles with bureaucrats planning for post-war administration. Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Northwest Territory, became a mediator of sorts between traders and agents in the field and royal officials making policy. The former, led primarily by George Croghan and Major Robert Rogers, were concerned with the potential for war once liberal trade practices were ended. The latter, led by Lord Jeffery Amherst, Commander-in-Chief of British forces and head administrator for the crown in America, were only concerned with social order and economic profit. Trade, however, was more than a matter of economics; it was a means of creating trust between people of different cultures. Ironically, Johnson's attempt to mimic the French trade network by reconstituting what he termed "the Old Covenant Chain" became too successful.<sup>7</sup> By undercutting France's trade network, prying apart the socio-political bond between the French and Indians, and contributing directly to England's victory by winning the confidence and potential allegiance of the Algonquin tribes, upon whom the French so deeply relied, Johnson's plan fostered instability on the frontier and contributed to the arrogance of British officials. Realizing the threat of new warfare as a real concern among the Indians, English agents warned their superiors of the cultural ramifications of such policies as the cessation of ritual gift giving, the drop in the quality of goods, and, particularly, the curtailment of trade in gunpowder. Crown officials responded by not

only ignoring the warnings but also often chastising the agents and traders as well as their Native associates. The British constantly resorted to a threat of force as a means of enforcing their will following the Seven Years' War, and Native Americans took exception.<sup>8</sup>

The ultimate source of the conflict between the Indians of the Great Lakes region and the British leadership was the latter's failure to recognize that the New World was defined by a triangular relationship between France, England, and the Native nations. For years the three groups had played one party off the other for personal gain. With the French gone the functional structure of the play-off system fell into an adversarial relationship between the English and the Indians. Despite many historians' perceptions that the Seven Years' War comprised a European struggle with some Indian participation on one of the two sides, the conflict never completely drew in the Indian nations. While many remained neutral, more often they simply remained aloof. It was not their affair and tribes only engaged in those battles where Europeans could illustrate that it was in the Indians' best interests to do so. More accurately, the Native Americans benefited from the clash while it lasted because the opposing sides attempted to curry their favor to obtain a superior military, economic, or diplomatic position. The Indians thrived in the vital center, literally and figuratively, until the French leadership surrendered the western position its forces and occupied and the British bureaucrats were allowed to envelop the Indians from the east.<sup>9</sup>

What the British leadership failed to discern was the climate differing cultural of perceptions. The Algonquins were characterized by French and English traders as distraught over the loss of their French allies and troubled over the prospect of living

under a British flag. Crown officials offered nothing to assuage their fears. Additionally, Native concerns were only increased amid outbreaks of starvation, disease, drunkenness, and internal violence. The traders, colonists, and missionaries who communicated with them did little to help these circumstances when all they fed the Indians were rumors of English brutality along the frontier and a pending French return that never seemed to materialize. As British bureaucratic indifference continued with regard to those Natives' lives it consumed, the Indian peoples scrambled to find a socio-political unity and corporate identity. It was within this milieu that Pontiac ascended.<sup>10</sup>

Pontiac shaped and articulated for his followers three distinct goals, each of which was predicated on the notion that "this country was given by God to the Indians."<sup>11</sup> The Algonquins needed a sense of unity to make a political statement carrying a diplomatic force equal to that of their European counterparts. A religious and cultural reformation served to provide the Ottawa chief with that sense of oneness whereby he could communicate among his people and to foreign leaders. As the various tribes of Pontiac's region followed his cues, the coalition that resulted gave the Ottawa a legitimate cultural basis upon which to mediate Euro-Indian disputes. For their part, French and English leaders gave credence to Pontiac's central position by continually elevating him to a prominent position during the negotiating process. Finally, as Pontiac provided a voice for Indian nations, he also awaited the response from the European nations to his activities. It was implicit but clear that war or peace was within his ability to control and Pontiac refused to see his coalition driven from their land by attrition or force.

It is important to note two cultural dynamics Pontiac used adeptly during his move toward leadership that kept him vital in the ever changing state of Euro-Indian

affairs: his status as *Okama* and the *Onontio* designation ascribed to the French king. Among the Algonquins being an *Okama*, or in a vague sense chief, offered Pontiac the opportunity to persuade his people, achieving rank by currying his people's favor. The tribesmen were free to follow or disregard the actions of this tribal leader, so oratorical skill became essential. Pontiac's skillful use of impassioned speeches, punctuated by wails, then followed by dances, are due less to the emotionalism of this leader and more to his conscious attempt to present himself as a capable *Okama*. Furthermore, he had already demonstrated his military prowess, an essential element of leadership among the Algonquins, by playing a decisive role in the rout of the British officer, Edward Braddock, in 1755. These elements added to his personal aura as he visited tribes clandestinely to enlist their assistance. His most important tool in the art of persuasion, though, was embodied in the use of *Onontio*. This was a term used to designate the French king, and indirectly his colonial governors, which loosely translates as "Great Father."<sup>12</sup> The close association of the French and Algonquins fostered an extrapolated relationship with the *habitants'* leader, whom the Indians understood in terms akin to an *Okama*. *Onontio* was to act just like Pontiac: persuasive, powerful, and generous. The *Voyageurs* and *Coueurs du Bois* served as *Onontio*'s "runners," carrying out the Great Father's reciprocal obligations. So long as quality goods came into Native possession at fair prices, there were no difficulties. With the French having quickly comprehended at least the functional elements of this assumption, *Onontio*'s ambassadors made homes among the tribes, married, and sired children. It is easy to see why Pontiac was so much a Francophile. As an *Okama* he understood the realities of his society. The bond was, quite literally, one of blood embodied in the *Metis*, or ethnically-mixed children.<sup>13</sup> But

rather than this becoming a weakness in a prospective pan-Indian coalition, it became a source of unity as Pontiac acquiesced to a continued French presence, realizing their dependency upon Native strength at the close of the Seven Years' War. He could keep utilizing France's desperation in combating England to secure supplies for his people. He could also continue to play the English off the French as the former were eager to wind down this costly war.<sup>14</sup>

So, culturally, diplomatically, and personally Pontiac was at the center, and it was amid this confusion that the *Okama* thrived for he alone promised to make the circumstances work to the Indians' best interests. One Lenapé chief stated with regard to their perception of English power after the fall of Quebec that they had "grown too powerfull & seemd as if they would be too Strong for God himself."<sup>15</sup> What he did not foresee was that a prophet among his own people would offer a divine vision to the Algonquins that eventually called Pontiac out as their best hope for some kind of messiah.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Antonello Gerbi, The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900 (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), *passim*; P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, The Great Map of Mankind: Perceptions of New Worlds In the Age of Enlightenment (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 26-28, 30-32, 45-47, 187-200, 207-10.

<sup>2</sup> Denton Bedford, "How to Start an Indian War," Indian Historian 6 (1973): 11-15; Michael McConnell, "The Search for Security: Indian-English Relations in the Trans-Appalachian Region, 1758-63," (Ph. D. dissertation. College of William and Mary, 1983), 337-425.

<sup>3</sup> Proclamation of King George, 7 October 1763, Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 21 vols. (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, 1855-1911), 11: 46-52. For a thorough discussion of the Proclamation Line of 1763 and its effects in America, see Lawrence Henry Gipson, New Responsibilities Within the Enlarged Empire, 1763-1766, vol. 9 of The British Empire Before the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), 41-126; Lawrence Henry Gipson, Thunder-Clouds Gather in the West, 1763-1766, vol. 10 of The British Empire Before the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), 3-110. For discussion of the diplomatic and economic policies of Crown officials, see Clarence Walworth Alvord, The Mississippi Valley in British Politics, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clarke, 1917).

<sup>4</sup> The term Algonquin is derived from the linguistic and cultural similarities of the tribes throughout the Great Lakes region. The other broad linguistic and cultural family brought into this piece are the Iroquois, of which the Senecas and Shawnees are members. Care is taken in other parts of the work to explain the appeal of Pontiac beyond his personal linguistic and cultural association. For the Senecas and Shawnees their acknowledgement of Pontiac's leadership is more a matter of common region than shared cultural assumptions. The Senecas were the western-most tribe of the Iroquois League, placing them in northern Pennsylvania and northeastern Ohio. The Shawnees inhabited the Ohio and West Virginia area. Pontiac conducted his operations primarily out of southern Michigan but not exclusively. The Senecas and Shawnees also had their own concerns with European encroachment and cultural slights that contributed to their rallying behind Pontiac when he began his activities. See Carl Waldman, Atlas of the North American Indian (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1985).

<sup>5</sup> These are the words of Seneca sachem Tanaghrisson at the 1751 Logstown Conference as quoted in Malcolm B. Brown, "'Is It Not Our Land?': An Ethnohistory of the

Susquehanna-Ohio Indian Alliance, 1701-1754," (Ph. D. dissertation. Oklahoma State University, 1996), iv.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., *passim*; Carl A. Brasseaux and Michael J. Leblanc, "Franco-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley, 1754-1763: Prelude to Pontiac's Uprising?," Journal de La Société Américanistes (Paris) 68 (1982): 59-71; Marshall and Williams, The Great Map of Mankind, 207-10; Wilbur R. Jacobs, "Presents to the Indians as a Factor in the Conspiracy of Pontiac," Michigan History 33 (1949): 314-22; Pierre Henri Boulle, "The French Colonies and the Reform of Their Administration During and Following the Seven Years' War," (Ph. D. diss. University of California, 1968), *passim*. Though covering the post-war years, author J. F. Boshier details many of the problems associated with French economic policies relative to trade during the war era. See J. F. Boshier, French Finances, 1770-1795: From Business to Bureaucracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 3-140, 182-96, 253-75, 303-18. While such an alliance system led to rather equitable treatment of Indians as well as sustained mutual benefit during a time of peace, in an era of war the system proved too unwieldy for strategic effectiveness with its patchwork design taking into account the complex tribal variations. A significant part of the problem associated with France's inability to get the Indians to coordinate efforts in combating English forces had to do with the cultural assumptions associated with the French king's *Onontio* or "Great Father" status. With many of the tribes being matrilineal, their assumptions regarding such patriarchal concepts caused them to view their alliance with the French as non-binding. Some ethnohistorians note with an air of jest, nonetheless quite serious in cultural analysis, that had the French referred to themselves as "Great Mother" or even "Great Uncle," the most important male figure in matrilineal cultures, the response from many of their Indian allies during the Seven Years' War might have been more reliable and impassioned. See David Hurst Thomas et al., The Native Americans: An Illustrated History (Atlanta, GA: Turner Publishing, Inc., 1993), 269-74.

<sup>7</sup> Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-September, 1761, Sir William Johnson, The Papers of Sir William Johnson, 15 vols. (Albany, NY: University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), 3: 477.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., *passim*; McConnell, "The Search for Security," 354-57; R. David Edmunds, The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 75-95; Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 269-77; Francis Jennings, "The Indians' Revolution," in Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds., Major Problems in American Indian History (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1994), 177; F. L. Banon, "The New Battle Honour: North America, 1763-1764," Army Review 6 (1914): 572-98; James T. Clark, "Sir William Johnson and Pontiac," New York State Historical Association Proceedings 13 (1914): 85-107.

<sup>9</sup> White, The Middle Ground, 269-77; Gregory Evans Dowd, A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins

University Press, 1992), 23-27; Gipson, New Responsibilities, vol. 9 of The British Empire, 41-126.

<sup>10</sup> Abstract of a Plan to Excite a Rebellion in Canada, 1763, John R. Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 10 vols. (Albany: Weed Parsons and Co., 1853-1887), 10: 1155-57; Projet d'opération pour la Nouvelle Orleans relativement au Canada, 1763, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 421, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; Extract, Jenkins to Gladwin, 28 March 1763, Amherst Papers, Public Record Office, London (microfilm), reel 31; White, The Middle Ground, 278; Waldo Edward L. Smith, "French Missionaries and the Pontiac Conspiracy, 1761-1763," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought 8 (1931): 285-91; Gregory Evans Dowd, "The French King Wakes Up in Detroit: 'Pontiac's War' in Rumor and History," Ethnohistory 37 (1990): 254-271; Michel Brunet, Les Canadiens Après la Conquête, 1759-1775 (Montreal: Fidés, 1969), 58-70, 153; Paul A. W. Wallace, ed., Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 41, 88, 97.

<sup>11</sup> Conference at Detroit, 3 December 1760, Henry Bouquet, The Papers of Henry Bouquet, edited by S. K. Stevens and others, 15 vols. (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951), 15: 99.

<sup>12</sup> A literal translation of *Onontio* is "large mountain," speaking to French strength in their region prior to the Seven Years' War. The Algonquins understood such a designation to imply that the French should relate to them as a father to his children and their speeches bear this out. The cultural assumptions ascribed to such an association by Algonquins and Europeans are at a variance, thus they are the cause of misunderstandings. Historians still believe that this meant the Indians tacitly admitted their inferior, or at least overawed, state upon encountering the white man. This is not an accurate assessment. By referring to themselves as children they were putting the French in the position of an *Okama* who was obliged to retain their respect by providing for them and otherwise staying in their good stead. The Algonquins also understood that such a relationship retained for them the freedom to disregard their Father's desires if they thought them not in the interests of the tribe. But should that Father demonstrate that his desires were best, through oratory or gifts, it was also their obligation to join him. So, any Freudian analysis of Algonquin semantics on the part of historians speaks more to the cultural bias of psychohistory than any universal understanding of the father-child relationship. See Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1601-1791, 73 vols. (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Bros. Co., 1896-1901. Reprint, New York: Paget Book Company, 1959), 26: 63, 61: 251, 272, 49: 229-31, 51: 245, 67: 77. For a good discussion of *Okamas* and their role in Algonquin culture see James A. Clifton, "Potawatomi Leadership Roles: On Okama and Other Influential Personages," in Papers of the Sixth Algonquin Conference, edited by William Cowan, (Ottawa, Canada: National Museums of Canada, 1975): 42-100; David Baeris, "Chieftainship Among the Potawatomi: An Exploration of Ethnohistoric Methodology," Wisconsin Archaeologist,

54 (September 1973): 114-34; George I. Quimby, Jr., "Some Notes On Kinship and Kinship Terminology Among the Potawatomi of the Huron," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters 25 (1939): 553-63.

<sup>13</sup> The *Metis* Indians are comprised of many national and ethnic mixes leading to much debate as to whose culture they truly belong. But such debates carry overtones of the frugality of modern governments more than any notions of these people being trapped between two cultures. One example, the Citizen Band Potawatomi of Shawnee, Oklahoma were not granted tribal status until the late twentieth century by the United States. The impasse was, at its core, annuities and other federal benefits rather than legitimacy of *Metis*' heritage. See Katheryn Lamirand Young, "Never 'Quite' White- Never 'Quite' Indian: The Cultural Dilemma of the Citizen Band Potawatomi," (Ph. D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Emma H. Blair, ed., The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Region of the Great Lakes, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1911), *passim*; Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, 26: 63, 61: 272, 49: 229-31, *passim*; Clifton, "On Okama and Other Influential Personages," 42-100; Baeris, "Chieftainship Among the Potawatomi," 114-34; Quimby, "Some Notes On Kinship," 553-63.

<sup>15</sup> John W. Jordan, ed., "Journal of James Kenny, 1761-1763" Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 37 (1913): 187.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GOD IS A HEAVY BURDEN TO BEAR: THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE ASCENSION OF PONTIAC

“A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’”<sup>1</sup> These are the words of John the Baptist upon hearing of the work of Jesus across the Jordan River. “The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less.”<sup>2</sup> Following this declaration Christ emerged as central to the events of his day. Though this key figure was regionally and culturally specific, his words and deeds reverberated throughout an empire, eventually affecting Western Civilization of which the initial vision was not considered a part.

An analogous situation existed between the Lenapé<sup>3</sup> prophet, Neolin; the Ottawa war chief, Pontiac; and those European civilizations which the Natives’ religious message affected. Neolin brought to his people a more perfect way to live, much like John the Baptist had done in his day. The Lenapé prophet spoke of a path that would lead the people into the good graces of the Master of Life and held that such an endeavor required sacrifice in change. The prophet’s vision was borne of a fluid situation. The English were continually encroaching upon Native lands and the various tribes of the Northwest

were ready for a deliverer. From across the Great Lakes the voice of a bridegroom for Neolin's sovereign vision spread throughout the regional tribes. The *Okama*, Pontiac, declared, "I stand in the path!"<sup>4</sup> Such a statement wed this man to the prophet's spiritual message and had profound resonance among the Great Lakes tribes. A cultural path was prepared for Pontiac by Neolin, enabling him to lead disparate Indian peoples into a new understanding between the Master of Life and the Europeans, as well as among themselves. Pontiac fulfilled Neolin's prophecy. The spiritual and cultural legitimacy of the Algonquins' activities were believed as deeply in factual or mythical significance as John's and Christ's were in their time and place. Just as it is in Christian theology, the prophesied becomes greater, the prophet becomes less. Neolin's vision spread beyond the Lenapés and into the entire Great Lakes region offering an Indian leader the opportunity to ascend to a role beyond the narrow confines of his own people. And, it was Pontiac who used this vision to unite many of the Great Lakes peoples under his leadership, guiding them into a new realm of Euro-Indian understanding.

It is not surprising that a new theology came from the Lenapés given their social environment and loose tribal structure. English encroachment had continued unabated for years, pushing the Indians of the northern Appalachians into the Ohio Valley amid other peoples who were strangers to the coastal tribes. With the land supporting a larger population as well as the reopening of trade at Fort Pitt by the British, game became increasingly scarce. Either for food or fur, excessive hunting had resulted in widespread starvation, which in turn produced outbreaks of disease, drunkenness, and violence within the various Indian towns. Among Lenapé villages, seers had arisen offering solutions to their peoples' plight. Their lack of a central council and loose tribal organization, which

the geographic realities of resettlement had exacerbated, afforded prophets the liberty to spread visions and beliefs among those who resided in or near their location.<sup>5</sup>

Opposing spiritual factions, which might well be referred to as denominations, competed for believers and resulted in an evolutionary cycle within Algonquin cosmology. The Lenapé culture was not static, especially given its existence between French and English settlements, and it underwent religious changes that embodied something other than a mere absorption of Christian Europe's practices. The most significant change that made Neolin's message so appealing was the drift toward a more definite relationship between the Indians and their Creator. Algonquin culture was filled with *Manitous* who exacted tributes, required appeasement, and demanded sacrifices. This belief in a multiplicity of spirits was being altered as early as 1757 by a welling up of religious fervor "still in its infancy."<sup>6</sup> Lenapé prophets were seeing a "Master of Life who...was brown and beardless" as their creator, while the maker of the Europeans was "white and bearded."<sup>7</sup> If viewed in light of how Neolin later refined these elements this became more than simply evidence that so-called nativists were winning the theological debate. Rather, what should be construed from this development is that the Lenapés were attempting to resolve their dual theology dilemma internally, quite apart from missionary influence, in an effort to respond to the European presence with a single voice. The central theme of this broad-based reformation was a "belief in two spirits, one good, the other bad, the one inhabiting the heavens, the other the bowels of the earth."<sup>8</sup> The genesis of this reformation theology "goes back only to the time they commenced trade with Europeans," thus it was as much a product of Indian experiences as it was a demonstration of any success enjoyed by missionaries traversing the countryside.<sup>9</sup> These

successes were more accurately, negligible; few sincere converts were won. So, the dynamic at work among the Indians of the Northwest is more accurately described as a search for a sense of oneness, and religion became a common language which spoke to this end.<sup>10</sup>

Taking the visions as a whole, two distinct spiritual trends are discernible amongst the Lenapé prophets. The first can be described as a synthesis of religious themes, Christian and Algonquin, in an effort to accommodate the European presence. A man named Papounhan led the most significant of these in the 1750s with a theology bent on pacifism and similar to that given him by Quaker missionaries, prompting many to refer to those who adhered to this theology as “Quaker Indians.”<sup>11</sup> A competing theology appeared subsequent to the first led by one Wangomen. This trend witnessed the rise of nativism, or a call for a return to traditional modes of living, and a separation of all races existing in the region: red, white, and even black. It was tacitly more aggressive in that its adherents subtly called for the expulsion of all Europeans from Indian lands. With the many social forces pulling the Indian communities apart, the prophets’ task was to provide sense of unity. For Neolin such unity resided in a harmonization of the opposing theological trends which ultimately provided Pontiac with a symbolic vocabulary through which he drew together the converted tribes in support of a political vision that mirrored this spiritual counterpart.<sup>12</sup>

Neolin received the vision that was eventually coupled with Pontiac’s actions sometime between 1760-1762 and it stands as a final reconciliation of the dual theological paths created by the Lenapés; it provided all the peoples of the Great Lakes area with a single path to atonement with their Creator.<sup>13</sup> The vision initially entered by



way of a spirit in the form of "a man who came to [Neolin] by night while he sat by the fire alone and perfectly awake."<sup>14</sup> The Lenapé was "by himself musing & greatly concerned about the evil ways he saw prevailing among the Indians" when this figure arrived, becoming a sort of heavenly confirmation of the prophet's suspicions.<sup>15</sup> He told Neolin that "these things he was thinking of were right & that all who follow evill ways should goe to a Miserable Place aftr they dies but that those who hated all Evill & lived agreeable to the mind of God should aftr Death be taken up to God & made happy for Ever."<sup>16</sup> The broad cosmological situation was made clear in this first communication from the Great Spirit. The evolving monotheistic dimension of Algonquin religion brought in by the "Quaker Indians" was retained, but the components of pacifism and assimilation were discarded during Neolin's continuing dialog with the Master of Life. In retaining the exclusivist aspects of nativist theology, this new religion infused an air of the traditional and departed from any influences Christianity had upon the message.<sup>17</sup>

The final version of the vision that spread throughout the Indian villages, inspiring Pontiac's conversion and activity, presented the various peoples with a theology designed to foster intertribal communication. The Lenapé prophet communed with a single god whom he referred to by name, "the Master of Life," and whose role in the universe was explained to Neolin as "He who hath created the heavens and the earth, the trees, lakes, rivers, all men, and all that thou seest and hast seen upon the earth."<sup>18</sup> This great creator dismantled Algonquin spirituality by altering the nature of the Indians' relationship with their Creator and the expression of their faith. The Master used a gentle tone with his creation, often speaking of his love for all the people of the earth. Neolin listened as the Master of Life appealed to the Lenapé's sensibilities through a series of

questions regarding the white presence within the Natives' lands. He asked the prophet if his people could live without white assistance, implying that they should forsake technological implements like flints, tools, and guns for technology only fostered a harmful dependency. Such a reasonable deity was unknown to the Algonquin, their lives being filled with an array of malevolent *Manitous*. But Neolin related that all of this was a lie. Just as there was one benevolent god, there was only one evil counterpart, a single *Manitou* whose retention by the prophet kept this theology distinctly Algonquin. Neolin "had been ordered to shew [this] to the Indians, that they might see the situation in which [this] Mannitto had originally placed them, [this] misery which they had brought upon themselves by neglecting their duty, and the only way that was now left them to regain what they had lost,"<sup>19</sup> that being conversion to this new doctrine.<sup>20</sup>

The Master of Life then asked Neolin to commit this message to writing and use it as a means of persuading others to share in this new vision. Neolin proceeded to draw up an illustrated map he referred to as "the great Book or Writing"<sup>21</sup> that related the situation of the Indians as the Master of Life had explained it. The combined use of this pictographic map and the prophet's "almost constant crying whilst he was exhorting" the groups he visited helped the vision transcend linguistic barriers and facilitated a grasp of the importance Neolin placed upon the message.<sup>22</sup> Just as the printing press promoted Reformation theology across Europe, causing it to seep through all the layers of society, this theology recorded on deerskins traversed the Great Lakes producing a profound and varied result.<sup>23</sup>

Much has been made of the putative syncretistic nature of this prophecy, but such assessments fail to acknowledge the deliberate breadth of this vision ultimately utilized

by Pontiac. Christian themes did permeate Neolin's message. There was a single power for good standing in opposition to a single power for evil. The human soul was longing for paradise where "fat and plump" blessings awaited the righteous, while humanity also labored under the threat of being "carried to...regions...where the ground was parched up by the heat for want of rain."<sup>24</sup> There was also a loose concept of sin or human culpability for misery as Neolin chastised followers for not seeing *what they* had "lost by neglect and disobedience; by being remiss in the expression of [their] gratitude to the Great Spirit."<sup>25</sup> But such comparisons play upon vague concepts common to all mystery religions, of which Christianity is only one. Furthermore, Neolin did not express an interest in Christian theology to any great extent until 1766, after the events that his vision induced were effectively over. So, these links between the Lenapé prophet's vision and Christian missionary influence have mundane as well as abstract difficulties.<sup>26</sup>

Clearly what Neolin addressed was the specific social plight of the Indians with whom he came in contact. There is little doubt that many strictures calling for abstinence from excessive vices produced parallels between Christian and Native beliefs, but what practices were denoted as evil as well as those rituals prescribed to restore moral virtue among adherents were decidedly Indian in form and function. Neolin included among the "sacrifices" called for by the Master of Life rules similar to the Christian tenet of "abstinence from carnal knowledge of the other sexes."<sup>27</sup> An end to the use of other traditional practices like medicine bundles, designed to curry favor with *Manitous*, also pleased missionaries who had long desired to end such pagan customs. But Neolin also instituted many tenets that encompassed "customs...adopted since the white people came," tenets that were anathema to anything missionaries would have desired.<sup>28</sup> The

prophet called for the use of “emetics,” traditional herbal drinks concocted by many tribes that induced vomiting to represent a physical manifestation of a total purge of white culture from their bodies. Strictures such as these eventually became the most important to the new vision and bore the distinctive marks of negative experiences with Europeans, thus owing nothing to Christian influence. Neolin declared that the Master of Life commanded his Native children to “quit the use of firearms” and even make their fires by “rubbing two sticks together” for “fire was not pure that was made by flint and steel.”<sup>29</sup> Finally, Neolin ordered adherents to “abstain from drinking [the Europeans’] deadly *beson* [alcohol], which they have forced upon us, for the sake of increasing their gains and diminishing our numbers.”<sup>30</sup> While this practice, as such, might have pleased some Christian sects, the real point of its inclusion to the Native Americans was to put an end to the facilitation of their own demise. So, the ascription of the concept of sin owes much to the tendency of missionaries who viewed the nativist developments attempting to understand and convey what was happening by groping for an analogous religious theme within their own Christian theology.<sup>31</sup>

In seeing the social complexities of Neolin’s time and region, his visionary ability becomes more pronounced. Within the Great Lakes region both Protestant and Catholic missionaries affected Indian culture and the Lenapés, in particular, who resided in the Upper Ohio Valley, felt the influence of English Quakers, German Moravians, and French Jesuits who were all seeking converts. It was within this national and theological mixture that Neolin’s vision spread and within this same sectarian pool that the imagery associated with his vision provided for a potent means of persuasion across tribal barriers. The Lenapés, with their deeply-held religious convictions and fluid interaction with other

peoples, were recognized by the Europeans as the “*canaille* who stir up the rest to mischief.”<sup>32</sup>

Neolin’s influence upon Pontiac’s life began with the *Okama*’s having had ample opportunity to hear the new doctrine. Many trips were made on the part of the Ottawas and their chief to forts throughout the region, most notably Fort Pitt. Pontiac encountered the Lenapés and their theology during these meetings to discuss trade with English officials. The commonalties of not only Algonquin culture but also the feeling of constriction between the European powers made Pontiac’s heart a willing vessel for the reception of the vision. As the message was recorded on animal pelts, bartered for “one buckskin or two deerskins apiece,” many preachers returned to their homelands or traveled abroad to spread Neolin’s gospel.<sup>33</sup> Appeals to traditional spiritual intermediaries, described as “Little Gods” by one white missionary, allowed for the dissemination of a broad form of the doctrine throughout peoples who were not Lenapé, for it was ambiguous enough to provide for the integration of local spiritual traditions within the overall cosmological framework provided by the Master of Life. Pontiac’s Ottawas were no exception to this spiritual adaptation process. English travelers encountered a holy man, Katapelleecy, in 1764. A confidant of Pontiac, he maintained that he, too, heard from the Great Spirit and this gave Pontiac the corroboration for his own retelling of Neolin’s initial vision. This internalization of the Lenapé vision into Ottawa culture, as well as its reconciliation of Neolin’s spiritual abstractions and Pontiac’s temporal realities, provided the Ottawa war chief with a valid means of addressing all converts to the new religion regardless of tribal affiliation.<sup>34</sup>

By deconstructing Pontiac's relation of the vision it is apparent that the Ottawa chief was marrying his personal fortunes to Neolin's dream and the interpretation of its imagery was used to draw together the various tribes. In Pontiac's retelling of the prophet's celestial meeting, he brought out symbols that had an association to various Christian doctrines. What was being performed was a subtle appeal to the tribal status enjoyed by missionaries resulting from years of contact. He begins with his own Council of the Three Fires—a confederation comprising the Ottawas, Ojibways,<sup>35</sup> and Potawatomis—and fellow Algonquins, the Wyandots.<sup>36</sup> Pontiac spoke of Neolin having a female intermediary who led him to the Master of Life. She was a “woman...of radiant beauty, whose garments dimmed the whiteness of the snow” upon the mountain he had to climb to reach his destination.<sup>37</sup> Pontiac then related that she told the prophet to “disrobe completely, and leave all thy trappings and clothing at the foot of the mountain...[and to] go and bathe thyself in a river” she pointed out.<sup>38</sup> Only then did Neolin proceed to ascend the mountain. Among these peoples Catholicism was a strong influence, brought to them by the Jesuits, many of whom were still ministering and residing with the Indians, and Pontiac was aware of this circumstance. The correlation between the female guide and Mary are overt, not to mention the powerful reference to water immersion to purify oneself and the baptismal sacrament, all elements stressed by Jesuit missionaries. Beyond this, the Algonquin culture was matrilineal. The female images inherent in Catholicism, as well as Pontiac's oratory, facilitated an understanding of the vision eventually leading to many conversions. Once Neolin was atop the mountain, Pontiac's interpretation of the prophet's journey expanded in its regional as well as religious nature. He addressed the Lenapés, Shawnees, and Iroquois, among whom Protestant

missionaries—Quakers and Moravians—were establishing flocks. Having left his earthly vestiges at the foot of the mountain, Neolin waited to be given access to a group of three villages surrounded by a fence. The Great Spirit eventually opened a gate for him and Neolin was granted an audience. The Master of Life immediately “gave him a hat all bordered with gold to sit down upon.”<sup>39</sup> This is a curious image for Indians to comprehend especially given the Three Fires Tribes’ predilection for physical adornment,<sup>40</sup> but it is understandable given the context of both the Quakers’ and Moravians’ almost fanatical stance against human vanity. The former reference to Neolin’s waiting for the Master of Life to open the gate has connections to the importance of God’s sovereignty within the Calvinist theology of both Protestant sects in question. It is clear that Pontiac was utilizing all the religious imagery available to him to reach beyond tribal separations. But simply communicating beyond tribal and religious divisions was not enough to draw the Natives together completely. He needed a unifying element.<sup>41</sup>

A lingering affinity for the French, which was shared by the Algonquins, lay at the heart of Pontiac’s desire to explain his fulfilling Neolin’s vision as the Ottawa chief retold the discussion between the prophet and the Master of Life. Pontiac’s point with regard to the French was not simply a return to their way of life before the Seven Years’ War when a balance existed between European powers on Indian lands. Rather, the Ottawa chief made certain to comment upon the dependent nature of their relationship. “I know that those whom ye call the children of your Great Father [the French] supply your needs...ye could surely do without them.... But when I saw that ye were given up to evil, I led the wild animals to the depths of the forests so that ye had to depend upon

your brothers [the French] to feed and shelter you.”<sup>42</sup> The Master of Life, in Pontiac’s presentation, merely explained that he had made a land for the Indians and a land for the Europeans. The actions of each group muddled this relationship. The Great Spirit loved both, and Pontiac spoke to this, and in doing so he began distinguishing the sides of the looming struggle between good and evil, refining the elements of the struggle to incorporate explicitly the temporal loyalties of the Indians. The French “know me and pray to me, and I supply all their wants and all they give you,” explained the Master of Life.<sup>43</sup> Here Pontiac implied that their association with the French existed on Native terms, sanctioned by god who was working through them. “But as to those who come to trouble your lands,—drive them out, make war upon them. I do not love them at all; they know me not, and are my enemies, and the enemies of your brothers.”<sup>44</sup> Again, the divisions are implicit. But as Pontiac continued to intone the words of the Master of Life, he made explicit the social realities the Indians dealt with as a result of their association with the French. “I do not forbid you to permit among you the children of your Father [the French],” stated the Great Spirit, but only when the Indians “drive off [the] lands those dogs clothed in red [the British] who will do you nothing but harm” will he grant the Natives his good favor.<sup>45</sup> Through this careful relation of Neolin’s prophetic journey, Pontiac had synthesized the religious vision with the Indians’ existence between the European peoples and cast the mission he wanted to lead in terms that the tribes concerned could each understand.<sup>46</sup>

Lest any doubt exist regarding Pontiac’s interpretive consistency with that of Neolin’s words, parallels between the prophet’s initial vision and the *Okama*’s refinement of its themes demonstrate that the ideas of the two men were quite congruent. The



contention that the Ottawa chief merely harnessed Indian zeal for his own political ends loses support when Pontiac's apparent shift of Neolin's vision from being ambiguously anti-white to being clearly anti-British is considered. The Ottawa leader did little to alter the intent of the Lenapé's vision. Rather, the implication of that original message regarding contempt for white settlers of English nationality became a matter that was lost in the process of translation on the part of European witnesses. Neolin, himself, meant the vision as anti-British. This interpretation is based upon the specificity of the Lenapé language. They had used "a word for Europeans in general (*Schwonack*), for Anglo-American settlers (*Choanshikan*), and for the French (*Pelaciman*, derived from the English word, Frenchman). Even if we assume that Neolin employed the term *Schwonack*, he still may have been understood to mean the British, the most common Europeans in the recent Delaware, if not Ottawa, experience."<sup>47</sup> Moreover, culture and experience support this contention. The Lenapés braved the threat of assault on the part of the Onondagas, members of the Iroquois confederacy, who resided next to the Lenapés and became enforcers of British policy by the crown's strategic design, for siding with the French at the onset of the Seven Years' War. English settlers had also manipulated Native peoples in the Pennsylvania region in the quest for land for many years leading to considerable animus. Add to this that Neolin's people expressed a personal fondness for the Frenchmen they encountered after relocating in the west and the experiential context of Neolin's prophecy gives credence to the anti-British implication which Pontiac merely made explicit.<sup>48</sup>

There was also a tacitly aggressive tone to Neolin's message to which Pontiac was merely staying true. Conversion to the new doctrine promised tangible results. Both

men had called for daily prayers, emetic purges, and devotion to the behavioral elements of the vision as a moral basis for any pending diplomatic or militaristic moves.<sup>49</sup> Almost foreshadowing Pontiac's own declarations, Neolin stated that only after obedience to the Master of Life's revelations would "the Great Spirit give success to our [the Indians'] arms; then he will give us strength to conquer our enemies, to drive them from hence, and recover the passage to the heavenly regions which they have taken from us."<sup>50</sup> The prophet also promised his converts that "they would, in a few years, be able to drive the white people out of their country."<sup>51</sup> Such phenomenological elements to Native prophecies were an essential means for adherents to gauge the truth of a given spiritual message. The Algonquins were not emotional zealots easily duped by a charismatic display on the part of a would-be leader. Certainly a good delivery was a necessary component in appealing to tribesmen, but the lack of any explicit coercive mechanisms within Algonquin religion or politics made success the essential ingredient in any professed solution. On this matter, both Neolin and Pontiac were forced to make promises and have them brought to fruition. In this vision, the promise was simply an elimination of the British menace. But since Pontiac's ascension was divinely inspired, the Ottawa chief eventually found the demand for tangible results as proof of holy sanctification a personally taxing weight indeed.<sup>52</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> John 3.27-28 NIV.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 3.29-30.

<sup>3</sup> The tribal name Lenapé comes from their own dialect, thus it is used here. The Europeans often called them the Delawares and some works employ the literal translation of the word Lenapé meaning “wolf” or “wolf people.” Use of these terms interchangeably, especially within quotations, should thus be understood so as to avoid confusion.

<sup>4</sup> Henry R. Schoolcraft, Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1855), 3: 55. This paraphrased statement is taken from the account of Major Robert Rogers, in: Robert Rogers, A Concise Account of North America (New York: S. R. Publishers Limited, 1966), 241.

<sup>5</sup> Paul A. W. Wallace, ed., Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 41, 88, 97; James Mooney, The Ghost-Dance Religion and Wounded Knee (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973), 662-63, 666; Croghan Journal, Indian Conference, Detroit, 3 December 1760, Ecuyer to Bouquet, 11 March 1763, Croghan to Bouquet, 19 March 1763, Henry Bouquet, The Papers of Henry Bouquet, edited by S. K. Stevens and others, 15 vols. (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951), 15: 95, 10: 80; Council with Shawnees, 16 April 1762, Amherst Papers, Public Record Office, London (microfilm), reel 32; Croghan to Johnson, 24 April 1763, Declaration of James Grant, 24 December 1763, Sir William Johnson, The Papers of Sir William Johnson, 15 vols. (Albany, NY: University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), 10: 659-60, 13: 320; John W. Jordan, ed., “Journal of James Kenny, 1761-1763” Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 37 (1913): 187.

<sup>6</sup> Edward P. Hamilton, ed. and trans., Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-60 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 133.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 133-35; Herbert C. Kraft, The Lenapé: Archaeology, History, and Ethnography (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1986), 161-79; Melburn Delano Thurman, "The Delaware Indians: A Study in Ethnohistory," (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1973), *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> Frederick Post, "Relation of Frederick Post of Conversation with Indians, 1760," Pennsylvania Archives 138 vols. (Philadelphia: Severns and Company, 1852-1949), 3: 743.

<sup>12</sup> William A. Hunter, ed., "John Hays' Diary and Journal of 1760," Pennsylvania Archaeologist 24 (August 1954): 74-75; Charles Hunter, "The Delaware Nativist Revival of the Mid-Eighteenth Century," Ethnohistory 18 (Winter 1971): 40-44; Gregory Evans Dowd, "Paths of Resistance: American Indian Religion and the Quest for Unity, 1745-1815," (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 1986), 281-93; Anthony F. C. Wallace, "New Religions Among the Delaware," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 12 (1956): 1-21; Thurman, "The Delaware Indians," *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> The date on this is not specific for two reasons. First, the record of a conversation between Charles Beatty and Neolin in 1766 records that the prophet had his vision "about 6 years agoe," thus the date was only approximated. Second, Neolin had multiple visions over a period of time. The elements became more specific and detailed until they were finally recorded in the form of a pictographic map in 1762 which the prophet carried with him to convey the message as he traveled about the region eventually reaching the Ottawas of southeastern Michigan including Pontiac. See: Guy Soulliard Klett, ed., Journals of Charles Beatty, 1762-69 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962), 65; Dowd, "Paths of Resistance," 293-95.

<sup>14</sup> Klett, ed., Journals of Charles Beatty, 65.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> William A. Hunter, ed., "John Hays' Diary," 76-77; John McCullough, as reprinted in Charles Hunter "Delaware Revival," 43-44; Jordan, ed., "Journal of James Kenny," 171-72; David Zeisberger, "David Zeisberger's History of the Northern American Indians," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly 19 (1910): 133; John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania, and the Neighboring States (Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876), 291-93; Dowd, "Paths of Resistance," 293-96.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Agnes Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy, 1763 (Detroit: Speaker-Hines, 1912), 28. This translation of Pontiac's speeches as recorded by a French trader was selected to use quotations because its layout. The English translation and the original French text are printed side by side; therefore, the content can be verified for accuracy and context. Other translations that were also consulted include: Franklin B.

Hough, ed., Diary of the Siege of Detroit (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1860); Milo Milton Quaife, ed., The Siege of Detroit in 1763 (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1958). For discussions of the origin of this document, its authenticity, and identity of transcriber (believed to be Robert Navarré) see the introductions to each of these volumes as well as Helen H. Ellis, "A Mystery of Old Detroit," Bulletin: Detroit Historical Society 9 (October 1952): 11-12; Schoolcraft, Information Respecting the Indian Tribes of the United States, 2: 240-42.

<sup>19</sup> Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 291-93.

<sup>20</sup> William A. Hunter, ed., "John Hays' Diary," 76-77; John McCullough, as reprinted in Charles Hunter "Delaware Revival," 43-44; Zeisberger, "History of the Northern American Indians," 133; Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 291-93; Charles Hunter, "Delaware Revival," 42-43; Dowd, "Paths of Resistance," 303.

<sup>21</sup> Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 291-93.

<sup>22</sup> Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 668.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 662-69; William A. Hunter, ed., "John Hays' Diary," 76-77; John McCullough, as reprinted in Charles Hunter "Delaware Revival," 43-44; Jordan, ed., "Journal of James Kenny," 171-73; Zeisberger, "History of the Northern American Indians," 133; Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 291-93; Klett, ed., Journals of Charles Beatty, 65, 67-9; Charles Hunter, "Delaware Revival," 42-43; Kraft, The Lenapé, 161-79; Dowd, "Paths of Resistance," 303.

<sup>24</sup> Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 1: 291-93.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.; Hamilton, ed. and trans., Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 67-70; Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 666-68.

<sup>27</sup> Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 291-93.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.; Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 665-68; Jordan, ed., "Journal of James Kenny," 171-73; Klett, ed., Journals of Charles Beatty, 67-69; Charles Hunter, "Delaware Revival," 43-47; Kraft, The Lenapé, 161-79; Paul A. W. Wallace, ed., Conrad Weiser, 88, 144; Hamilton, ed. and trans., Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 133; Antonello Gerbi, The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900 (Pittsburgh, PA:

University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), *passim*; Margaret T. Hodgen, Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), 295-300, 354-57, 360-79; P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, The Great Map of Mankind: Perceptions of New Worlds In the Age of Enlightenment (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 26-28, 30-32, 45-47, 187-200, 207-10; James Axtell, "The European Failure to Convert the Indians: An Autopsy," in Papers of the Sixth Algonquin Conference, edited by William Cowan, (Ottawa, Canada: National Museums of Canada, 1975): 275-88. A Shawnee chief's remark to Conrad Weiser on the matter of conversion to Christianity was indicative of the lack of sincerity on the part of many Indians. Weiser repeated the Shawnee's statement that "the religion of the white man was not in his heart but in his mouth," meaning the machinations of religious practice were entered into by many Indians but rarely matured beyond appeasement of the missionaries. See Paul A. W. Wallace, ed., Conrad Weiser, 42-43.

<sup>32</sup> Ecuyer to Bouquet, 29 May 1763, as quoted in Francis Parkman, The Conspiracy of Pontiac, 2 vols. (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 2: 5. See also Charles Hunter, "Delaware Revival," 43-47.

<sup>33</sup> Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 291-93.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.; Croghan Journal, Indian Conference, Detroit, 3 December 1760, Bouquet Papers, 15: 95; Declaration of James Grant, 24 December 1763, Johnson Papers, 10: 659-60, 13: 320.

<sup>35</sup> Ojibways were also referred to as Chippewas.

<sup>36</sup> Wyandots were also referred to as Hurons.

<sup>37</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 24, 26.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>40</sup> The Three Fires Tribes had a culture wherein status was shown and elaborate attire elevated one's status. *Okamas* derived their prestige in leadership by their own physical appearance. The French and British also manipulated this cultural trait in the presentation of medals to those individuals more inclined to negotiate with them. By giving these medals the *Okama* was raised to a status more commonly associated with the term chief, which the French erroneously understood in terms akin to divine right monarchs. See James A. Clifton, The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665-1965 (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), 67, 119; R. David Edmunds, The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 22.

<sup>41</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 22-32; Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 662-69; Clifton, The Prairie People, 67, 109, 120-21; James A. Clifton, George L. Cornell, and James M. McClurken, People of the Three Fires: The Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibway of Michigan (Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Tribal Council, 1986), *passim*; James A. Clifton, The Pokagons, 1683-1983: Catholic Potawatomi Indians of the St. Joseph River Valley (New York: University Press of America, 1984), *passim*; Dowd, "Paths of Resistance," 296, 303; Melvin B. Endy, Jr., William Penn and Early Quakerism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), *passim*; Gillian Lindt Gollin, Moravians in Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), *passim*; Gerbi, The Dispute of the New World, *passim*; Hodgen, Early Anthropology, 295-300, 354-57, 360-79; Marshall and Williams, The Great Map of Mankind, 26-28, 30-32, 45-47, 187-200, 207-10.

<sup>42</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 28, 30.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 22-32; Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 662-69; Dowd, "Paths of Resistance," 303; Charles Hunter, "Delaware Revival," 46-47.

<sup>47</sup> Dowd, "Paths of Resistance," 303.

<sup>48</sup> Paul A. W. Wallace, ed., Conrad Weiser, 97-98, 100, 108, 129ff, 354, 371, 385, 389, 407, 434, 439, 464; Lyman C. Draper, The Draper Manuscript Collection (Chicago: Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, 1973), 1 D 399 microform; Frank G. Speck, A Study of the Delaware Big House Ceremony (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1931), 43; Malcolm B. Brown, "'Is It Not Our Land?': An Ethnohistory of the Susquehanna-Ohio Indian Alliance, 1701-1754," (Ph. D. diss. Oklahoma State University, 1996); Denton Bedford, "How to Start an Indian War," Indian Historian 6 (1973): 11-15; Milton W. Hamilton, "Myths and Legends of Sir William Johnson," New York History 34 (1953): 15; Richard Dorson, "Comic Indian Anecdotes," Southern Folklore Quarterly 10 (1946): 113-28; Francis Jennings, "The Indians' Revolution," in Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds., Major Problems in American Indian History (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1994), 177. One of the largest affronts endured by the Lenapés was committed during the growth of Pennsylvania. Though William Penn treated the Indians relatively well when compared to many other English colonists, his heirs manipulated the original terms of a deed in a very ignoble manner. Called the "Walking Purchase," in 1734 Thomas Penn persuaded the Lenapés into viewing an old, incomplete, and unsigned deed from 1686 as a binding bill of sale. Figuring the boundary adjustment minor, the Lenapés were willing to adhere to the original terms of the agreement wherein the English colonists were granted territory equal to the distance a man could walk in a day and a half. Thomas Penn then

proceeded to hire men with axes to clear a path for three strong walkers to make their way into Lenapé land. Two of the men collapsed from exhaustion, the third managed to cover some sixty-four miles in the allotted time. The claim Penn eventually made on the Lenapés encompassed approximately twelve hundred square miles, virtually all the Lenapés' land. After the boundaries were set the deed Penn had spoken of conveniently disappeared, though he assured the Indians he had a valid copy. The Lenapés understandably refused to leave their territory and the Pennsylvania government enlisted the assistance of the Iroquois League, self-proclaimed masters over the Lenapés, to enforce the new boundary lines. See Paul A. W. Wallace, ed., Conrad Weiser, 97-98, 100, 108, 464; David Hurst Thomas et al., The Native Americans: An Illustrated History (Atlanta, GA: Turner Publishing, Inc., 1993), 270. In the subsequent years that saw the ascension of Pontiac and a coalition of tribes to confront the English, the Lenapés acknowledged only the Senecas of the Iroquois League as "Uncles," high praise with implicit obligations of loyalty. The bond was based upon the Senecas converting to Neolin's doctrine and joining Pontiac's unified effort to address the European powers spreading throughout Indian land. See Paul A. W. Wallace, ed., Conrad Weiser, 469.

<sup>49</sup> It is interesting to note that Pontiac allowed followers "one draught, or two at most, in one day" of alcohol. His call was more for temperance than prohibition, as Neolin had demanded. This, too, was Pontiac's refining of the elements of the vision to incorporate social realities. In this case, the alcohol trade was still lucrative for the French, as it was for the British, and a total cessation of its consumption would have economic ramifications that would, in turn, affect the friendly relations between the French and Algonquins. Being an astute diplomat, Pontiac did not call for an end to trade but only sought moderation in its consumption. See Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 665; Emma H. Blair, ed., The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Region of the Great Lakes, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1911), *passim*; Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1601-1791, 73 vols. (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Bros. Co., 1896-1901. Reprint, New York: Paget Book Company, 1959), 26: 63, 61: 272, 49: 229-31, *passim*.

<sup>50</sup> Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 291-93.

<sup>51</sup> Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 668.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 665-668; Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs, 291-93; James A. Clifton, "Potawatomi Leadership Roles: On *Okama* and Other Influential Personages," in Papers of the Sixth Algonquin Conference, edited by William Cowan, (Ottawa, Canada: National Museums of Canada, 1975): 42-100; David Baeris, "Chieftainship Among the Potawatomi: An Exploration of Ethnohistoric Methodology," Wisconsin Archaeologist, 54 (September 1973): 114-34; George I. Quimby, Jr., "Some Notes On Kinship and Kinship Terminology Among the Potawatomi of the Huron," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters, 25 (1939): 553-63.



## CHAPTER THREE

### TRAPPED ON THE MIDDLE GROUND: INDIAN UNITY, EUROPEAN RESPONSES, AND PONTIAC AS MEDIATOR

The Algonquins' occupancy of the middle ground between French and English territorial claims placed them not only at the geographic center, but the diplomatic center as well. Neolin's vision was being spread throughout the region. Messengers with belts, prophecies, and calls for councils added a political compliment to the sense of unity that this vision inspired. And the one name that was heard most frequently by 1763 was that of the Ottawa War chief, Pontiac. As the coalescing tribes became more aware of Pontiac's rhetoric, skills, and promises, so too did the English and French officials who wanted to coax the Indians over to their side and thus tip the balance of power in their favor. Both European powers had a dual mission of winning the Seven Years' War and securing financial benefits in the form of trade. These goals were not mutually exclusive. From the Indian perspective, good trade created trust, demonstrated prestige, and ensured tranquility. The French were aware of these Native assumptions and used their shared experiences with the Algonquins to their advantage whenever possible. But English traders, having daily contact with Algonquins, were coming to understand what the French had seemingly always known. By approaching the Indians on their own terms one could curry favor. And it was France's *Onontio* status that Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson, wanted. It did not take him long to realize Pontiac, with his

growing legion of followers, was the only Indian leader who could fulfil this Englishman's desire. While Pontiac remained politically supple enough to negotiate with the British, his sincere conversion to Neolin's doctrine coupled with great cultural affronts committed by English officials inevitably drove the Ottawa chief and his loyalists toward the French in the west geographically and diplomatically. The middle ground that Pontiac controlled was thus transformed into a field of battle.

Neolin's message also called for a gradual conversion process wherein allowances were made for a leader to mediate on behalf of those Indians following his message. Pontiac became that spokesman. The period of disassociation from British supplies was to take seven years under Neolin's plan. Purportedly, this would give the Indians time to adapt to their new modes of living. Negotiation was a must in the interim and Pontiac seized upon this time to secure support from the French, thus his supplemental claim from the Master of Life that "when [He] saw that ye were given up to evil, [He] led the wild animals to the depths of the forests so that ye had to depend upon your brothers [the French] to feed and shelter you."<sup>1</sup> Pontiac merely demonstrated that those successes enjoyed by the Indians during their interaction with the French were evidence of the Great Spirit being pleased with Indian obedience. By bestowing blessings upon His children, Neolin's vision was given phenomenological support and Pontiac's intertribal *Okama* status was reinforced.<sup>2</sup>

Harmony between prophet and prophesied was reflected in the actions of their followers as tribes throughout the region continued to internalize Neolin's vision just as Pontiac had done and that only facilitated the Ottawa's ascension. Bands of Lenapés receded into the mountains to apply the new teachings to their daily lives. They made

use “of no other weapons than their bows and arrows,” rejected European trade goods, and lived off the land.<sup>3</sup> Members of the Three Fires Council, particularly the Potawatomis, continued a pattern of close association with the French still in their region. They feared that “if [they] suffer[ed] the English among [them, they] were dead men.”<sup>4</sup> “Sickness, smallpox, and [the Englishmen’s] poison will destroy you entirely” admonished the Master of Life and the Indians lived in fear and trembling of these words.<sup>5</sup> Many even continued to practice religious rites with French Jesuits both to maintain good relations and absorb any extra spiritual power available to them; thus, they sought out priests to baptize them as a safeguard against divine retribution. Neolin, himself, even followed Pontiac’s practice of using imagery to promote cultural understanding and persuade the Shawnees to join them. He likened the religious message to a “bitter water...to purge out all that they got from ye White peoples ways and Nature.”<sup>6</sup> The Shawnees often used a bitter drink metaphor in relation to their own cultural exclusivity.<sup>7</sup>

It also had a practical expression through the use of emetics. The Shawnees were not specifically related to the Great Lakes’ Algonquins, rather they were closer in culture and language to the Iroquois of the eastern shores of the North American continent. Particularly among Iroquois peoples of the southeast, the use of herbal brews to purge the body and soul was common and the Shawnees retained such a cultural distinction. Neolin moved to the Shawnee town of Wakatomica shortly after his vision to flee British military threats as well as to continue to spread his message. Wakatomica was home to many Indians who nourished within themselves a strident opposition to a continued English presence in the region. Neolin and his Shawnee associates finally mixed

theology and culture in the form of a “black drink” which the Master of Life told the prophet to consume. The subsequent conversion of the Shawnees to Neolin’s vision and the utilization of emetics as a sort of sacrament was so widespread that the missionaries took to calling Wakatomica simply “vomit town.”<sup>8</sup> So here Neolin used the emetic and its image to entice fellow tribes while broadening the confines of the drink’s usage to apply to Indian exclusivity, therein taking on the Euro-Indian dichotomy Pontiac articulated. Finally, the Indians of the region who converted to this new religion began a common cultural communication in the “proffer [of] the left hand which is nearest the heart.”<sup>9</sup> The idea was to give “the heart along with the hand” to fellow believers, for in doing so they shared in their bond both heartfelt beliefs as well as pending temporal actions.<sup>10</sup>

In all, the Master of Life had spoken to his people through Neolin, but the prophet as well as all Indian believers knew an active component, a war chief, would seize upon his vision. There was little regard given to the threat of force by the English. Lenapé, Shawnee, and Wyandot leaders told their English counterparts that the Indians were aware “the English always told them that they had as many men as there were leaves on the trees,—but that they [the Indians] looked upon one Indian as a thousand of them, and notwithstanding they are but Mice in Comparison to them, they will bite as hard as they can.”<sup>11</sup> The hope of every Indian was that their small number would enable them to wage a more effective campaign. The Lenapés reiterated that sentiment. Speaking by way of analogy, they explained that “when you look for a wild turkey you cannot always find it, it is so little it hides itself under the bushes: and when you hunt for a rattlesnake, you cannot find it; and perhaps it will bite you before you see it.”<sup>12</sup> Neolin was aware of the

state of affairs in the Great Lakes region. The British came to make war against the French as well as any Indians who crossed royal will. The Master of Life told his children how they should conduct themselves regarding these affairs as the Lenapé prophet stated casually to a missionary and trader that he thought “there will be Two or Three Good Talks and then War.”<sup>13</sup> With a vision present, an Indian leader was required to give that vision voice on behalf of its many believers, and that leader who saw disparate tribes unite, like so many beads in a *wampum* belt, which he would then carry into war was Pontiac.<sup>14</sup>

Pontiac then utilized Native customs to strengthen the burgeoning diplomatic alliance. The French became adept at performing rituals and understood their significance in some measure, though mainly their desire was to avoid offending their Native associates. So, Pontiac’s stature among the coalescing tribes can be gleaned from the constant surfacing of *wampum* belts. The French had given Pontiac the first belt through the Wea tribe which followed Pontiac’s new path. He was told that “Ononteeo [the French king] was not crushed as the English had reported, but had got upon his legs again.... That a French army had landed in Louisiana, and that [Louis XV] would drive the English out of the country.”<sup>15</sup> Pontiac believed his course of action clear, and he used *Onontio* to unite the Francophile tribes. During his grand council at the Ecorse River near Detroit in May 1763, the Ottawa chief began his speeches, presenting *Onontio*’s belts to prospective followers. Other belts were also presented that had reached him through the Senecas—a French ally of the Iroquois League whose other five tribes were under the influence of Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the British Crown<sup>16</sup>—and various *habitants*, many of whom did not want to live under a

British flag at Detroit. Pontiac exhorted his tribesmen, particularly fellow *Okamas*, to follow his lead. By the end of his speech they “told him that he had only to speak and they were all ready to do what he demanded of them.”<sup>17</sup>

Throughout his entire association with both French and English representatives Pontiac’s personal leanings toward the former have much to do with constant shifts in European policy. Personality clashes erupting internally with each of the European powers vying for the chief’s loyalty only prompted him to cling to the Frenchmen he could trust. Traders had closer associations with the Natives than crown administrators. The traders interacted on a social level and possessed a better understanding of how the processes of communication worked between the European and Native cultures. It is within this group that the first hint of Pontiac’s importance to the Europeans became apparent.

When trade practices became abusive and illicit the Ottawa chief used the issue to turn *Onontio*’s obligation of supplying the Indians against their Father. Pontiac was aware that his warriors were the key to prolonging the war and he used this knowledge to keep his options plentiful and prominence high. The commandant of Fort Ponchartrain, François Marie Picoté, Sieur de Bellestre, was fully cognizant of Pontiac’s activities in attempting to secure an acceptable settlement for his people. Realizing Pontiac was in a hospitable mood, at least diplomatically, Bellestre attempted to communicate to the Ottawa chief and his followers the consequences of soliciting British gifts. Bellestre stated flatly that the crown of England planned only “slavery” and “destruction” for the Indians.<sup>18</sup> His advice was for the Detroit area tribes to relocate near Kaskaskia in present-day Illinois. Such advice fit nicely into French diplomatic developments as well

as military strategy. After Bellestre's council with Pontiac, the French commandant was planning to surrender Fort Ponchartrain to Major Robert Rogers, the British representative negotiating with him at the time. The fall of Canada was a foregone conclusion. The French planned to regroup in the west, then launch another offensive utilizing Pontiac's Indians, but what betrayed Bellestre's plans were the activities of the Jesuits.<sup>19</sup>

The "black robes"<sup>20</sup> became the self-proclaimed moral arbiters of this critical period and, as such, served as the most effective, if unsuspecting, informants for an *Okama* like Pontiac. Throughout the Seven Years' War the Jesuits were at odds with the King, the colonial governors, as well as the military officials concerning the presence of the *Voyageurs* and *Coueurs du Bois*. Louis XV had outlawed their trade in New France during the war for fear of supplying pro-British Indians. But the French trade continued unabated instigated by military officials aware of the obligations of gift giving. The Jesuits, for the sake of peace and their own power, exposed these practices and even asserted that the *Voyageurs* and *Coueurs du Bois* had been skimming profits with the assistance of Bellestre. Pontiac manipulated the situation through the Wyandots. This tribe under his leadership was factionalized between "good Hurons" and "bad Hurons," the first group was prompted to remain peaceful by Father Poitier who threatened to withhold sacraments, the second group was following Pontiac's new vision.<sup>21</sup> For these Wyandots loyal to Pontiac, such a religious threat had no force. The Ottawa chief used the divided Wyandots and the apolitical Jesuits to send a half-truth that reached Lord Jeffery Amherst, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the New World. "The chiefs of the Hurons, Sir, answered that by several Frenchmen they had already learned

of the truth of the mischievous news [of Pontiac] and...that they knew their interests too well and what they owed their wives, children, and themselves...that they had not received the *wampum* belts [of *Onontio*] and *if they had done so*...[it would have] render[ed] themselves guilty of monstrous ingratitude and treason" toward the British with whom they had negotiated.<sup>22</sup> Such diplomacy as this enabled Pontiac to continue to talk with both the British and French, acquire gifts that the *Okama* could distribute among his Indians, and create a role for himself as a mediator between the three peoples.<sup>23</sup>

The British exploited this slight lag in the diplomatic relationship between French traders and Pontiac, further illustrating the Ottawa chief's importance in holding sway over his people's actions. Trader George Croghan traveled with Major Robert Rogers to entreat the Indians of the Northwest to establish an alliance with England. Pontiac was the man with whom they learned they must negotiate, thus they knew he must be gained to their interests. Upon approaching the Detroit area, Croghan and Rogers were stopped by Pontiac's Ottawas and demanded to know their business. The British officials explained that they had come to take command of Fort Detroit and, for the first time, spoke of the demise of the French in Quebec. This information exposed the pretense of Bellestre's relocation plan in a very public. Capitalizing on the diplomatic gaffe, Rogers presented the Indians with a *wampum* belt that gave credence to his account of the situation. The Ottawas left to hold a council meeting, then returned to offer the British representatives the opportunity to legitimize their presence in the Indians' territory through performing the ritual of the Calumet, a pipe of peace held in high regard and endowed with sacred obligations to uphold any agreements reached while it was smoked.<sup>24</sup>



Croghan and Rogers performed the rite and the Ottawas agreed to accompany them on their trek toward Detroit offering protection and labor. Such assistance proved valuable in spreading the word that the British had entered the region and that Pontiac permitted their visit. A group of Wyandot warriors halted Croghan's and Rogers's trip to the fort after Bellestre falsely excited them with news of a pending British invasion. The Wyandots paused after seeing the Ottawas traveling with the Englishmen. Rogers produced another belt while explaining that the Indians would "live happily in their own country."<sup>25</sup> He added a request, asking the Natives to, "Tell [their] warriors to mind their fathers (the French) no more, for they are all prisoners to your brothers (the English), who pitied them, and left them their houses and goods, on their swearing by the Great One who made the world, to become Englishmen forever. They are now your brothers; if you abuse them, you affront me, unless they behave ill."<sup>26</sup> After receiving word that Croghan and Rogers planned to meet with the local tribes in two days, the Wyandots and Ottawas left for their homes "in good temper."<sup>27</sup> The British were easing into a position of legitimate power through a sincere effort to approach the Algonquins on a cultural basis, performing Native rituals and adhering to accepted protocol.<sup>28</sup>

Bellestre continued to facilitate British advances with ill-advised reactions to Pontiac's negotiations with the new arrivals. Pontiac never responded to requests by the commandant that he move his people west. So the Frenchman attempted a diplomatic snub of the British to acquire more time for talks with the Ottawa chief. The French commander dispatched messengers to Croghan and Rogers asking to see official orders from their superiors regarding surrender of the post. Rogers constantly responded by giving him the papers accompanied with an explanation, but always to little immediate

avail. As the letter exchanges continued, Pontiac approached the British representatives at their encampment asking to hold the negotiations promised with the Algonquins. The meetings proceeded until Bellestre was made aware of this development. Seeing that his delay tactics did not work, the Frenchman sent an emissary to Pontiac during his talks with Croghan who stated that “the French were very angry with the Indian Nations for meeting with [Croghan] and threatened to burn down their towns.”<sup>29</sup> This was a monumental blunder on the part of Bellestre for the one advantage the French still had, *Onontio* status, obliged them to care for their Indian children. Croghan assured the chief he “might depend on it, that if any damage was done them by the French that we [the English] would see the damage repaired.”<sup>30</sup> Pontiac closed the meeting and agreed to travel “with some chiefs...to Fort Pitt to sound out the English” and that in the interim he would allow “Rogers and a handful of Men to take possession of the Fort [at Detroit], and Colony.”<sup>31</sup> The personal abuse suffered by Bellestre only compounded his diplomatic failure. Hanging from the fort’s flagpole was “a wooden effigy of a man’s head on the top, and upon that a crow...the crow was to represent himself, the man’s head [Rogers’s], and the meaning of the whole, that [Bellestre] would scratch out his brains.”<sup>32</sup> Upon seeing the sign, Pontiac’s followers merely told the French commandant that “the reverse would be the true explanation of the sign.”<sup>33</sup> The Ottawa people proceeded to receive the British “with Joy, and us[ed] Monsieur Belletre [*sic*] with much disrespect.”<sup>34</sup>

Rogers continued the talks as Croghan returned with word to his superior, Sir William Johnson, that Pontiac was prepared to give *Onontio* status to England. Johnson, seeing the importance of winning over Pontiac, was making plans to negotiate personally with the Ottawa chief who had placed himself at the center of the balance between peace

and war. Rogers continued to deliver “friendly messages, or belts of *wampum*, which he [Pontiac] received.”<sup>35</sup> Pontiac, in turn, “enquired whether I [Rogers] wanted anything that his country afforded, and he would send a warrior to fetch it?”<sup>36</sup> The major was careful to follow Algonquin protocol and not refuse gifts. He duly compensated Pontiac for his offerings of corn and other sustenance which demonstrated to the chief that a lasting relationship was plausible. The Ottawa “assured [Rogers], that he was inclined to live peaceably with the English...and to encourage their settling of the country; but, intimated, that, if they treated him with neglect, he would shut up the way, and exclude them from it.”<sup>37</sup> Pontiac then brought the Calumet to Rogers. The two performed the ritual and Pontiac agreed to continue to protect Rogers and his men from any harm. Pontiac left to negotiate with Johnson and their council was a success. Johnson followed similar protocol offering *wampum* belts, gifts, and promises of generous trade terms if Pontiac would merely keep his warriors at peace. Pontiac was thus persuaded into presenting his people with a new Great Father and stability in the region seemed secured.<sup>38</sup>

Eventually the British wasted this opportunity to lure their Ottawa adversary away from the French because higher officials altered policy. As the Seven Years’ War ended, Crown diplomats and military officials tried to settle the question of how to occupy the newly-conquered French territory. Lord Amherst was quick with an answer. The solution he offered, however, showed more of his ignorance of Algonquin culture than any skills he possessed in the art of statesmanship. Amherst ordered the practice of gift giving halted, raised the prices of trade goods to recoup war debts, and sent word through his field agents that “the Indians should live by the Hunting and not think that they are

always to be receiving presents.”<sup>39</sup> Croghan wrote to Johnson that Pontiac and his people asked “ye reason that we [the British] allways was Calling them to Council During ye [Seven Years’] War and Giving them presents and Now Take No Notice of them.”<sup>40</sup> He continued with an ominous sentiment in regard to Pontiac’s potential for war adding the Indians believed “ye French was butt a poor peple butt they allways Cloathed any Indians that was poor or Naked when they come to see them.”<sup>41</sup> Croghan was not so subtle when he wrote Johnson that, “If they [the Indians] ware united I am of the opinion that we should Soon have an Indian Warr.”<sup>42</sup> Johnson took such pleas from his agents seriously and petitioned Amherst to change his policies. He warned Amherst of the breach in tribal etiquette and the interpretations Pontiac would have of such an action as well as the dire repercussions. Amherst told Johnson that these plots were “Meer Bugbears” and admonished him that if Pontiac summoned a war whoop among his people it would be the “Greatest misfortune that befall them [the Indians].”<sup>43</sup> Amherst then heaped personal insult on his subordinate by ordering him to inform Croghan that the presents given to Pontiac at Fort Pitt were not authorized and that recompense must be offered to the Crown by Croghan himself; the trader was docked one year’s salary.<sup>44</sup>

As his agents were almost in league against him, Amherst resorted to cloaked means of controlling Indian hostility. If the Indians listened to the Jesuits, the Order was the best means of keeping the tribes in check. Using Father Du Jaunay, Father Poitier, and Father Girault, all missionaries to Pontiac’s tribes, Amherst offered simple gifts of poor quality so as to appear sincere in their desire to assist the mendicants while not costing the British government much money. The priests gladly accepted. The British assumed that the Indians “will believe everything told to them” through these priests.<sup>45</sup>

But while the Jesuits exerted some control, Pontiac exerted more. Amherst's actions greatly offended the Indians and they spoke of them often after Pontiac's return.<sup>46</sup> The Jesuits could see the cultural implications that would result for the British and that vehement opposition meant the priests' deaths. This policy only earned Amherst Jesuit neutrality, not Indian neutrality, and the tribes of the Great Lakes turned to their *Okama* for guidance. Pontiac decided to look west toward the French in the Louisiana Territory. Like the British, French authorities were undergoing their own policy shift and such a shift had Pontiac's aid factored in by design. The Ottawa chief was far from marginalized as Amherst had hoped.<sup>47</sup>

French officials decided to redouble their efforts to retain the services of Pontiac while they renewed their assault on British forces, and Pontiac finally agreed to "try [*Onontio*'s] hatchet upon the English," making himself the key obstacle in England's desired hegemony.<sup>48</sup> As Pontiac was discussing acceptance of the British presence in Detroit and being insulted by Bellestre, the Governor of the Louisiana Territory, Louis Billouart de Kerlérec, conspired with the besieged Canadian governor, Pierre-François de Vaudreuil, to initiate a contingency plan to rescue New France. Put simply, the plan was guerilla warfare using French troops in concert with Indians. Colonel de Jumilhac, who brought the idea to Kerlérec, described the style of engagement as "less offensive [than] defensive on the part of French troops. It is by means of the [Indians], to whom the governor provides an officer to command them and a small detachment of troops, that we wage offensive war...in the extremities of the colonies."<sup>49</sup> Further, "This type of warfare gives rise to the necessity of veteran officers, who are familiar with the manners and customs of the different tribes."<sup>50</sup> Thus the French strategy included the Indians as

partners. As such, the leaders of Louisiana had to contract with the leaders of the Indians if they wanted to begin this covert campaign against the English. The one most capable of bringing enough Indian military prowess to bear was Pontiac. *Wampum* was circulated throughout the Great Lakes and the persuasive name of *Onontio* was invoked. "Pontiac, wholly occupied with his project and nourishing in his heart a poison which was to be fateful to the English, and perhaps the French" took Kerlérec's promises of gifts and supplies and war belts were sent throughout his tribes.<sup>51</sup> At the council Pontiac called for unified action saying, "It is important for us, my brothers, that we exterminate from our lands this nation [England] which seeks only to destroy us."<sup>52</sup> He then reminded those assembled of the cultural obligations of an *Onontio*, a duty the French recognized but which the English viewed as the product of requests emanating from mere financial parasites. "You see as well as I that we can no longer supply our needs, as we have done, from our brothers, the French. The English sell us goods twice as dear as the French do, and their goods do not last...and when we want to set out for our winter camps they do not give us any credit as our brothers, the French, do."<sup>53</sup> He made the insult personal by stating, "When I go to see the English commander<sup>54</sup> and say to him that some of our comrades are dead, instead of bewailing their death, as our French brothers do, he laughs at me and you. If I ask anything for our sick, he refuses with a reply that he has no use for us."<sup>55</sup> He then spoke of his own manipulation of the French to the Indians' advantage explaining that

all the nations who are our brothers attack them,—why should we not attack? Are we not men like them...? Do we fear that our brothers, the French, who are here among us will prevent us? They do not know our plans and could not hinder anyway, if they would. You all know as well as I that when the English came upon our lands to drive out our Father, Bellestre, they took away all the Frenchmen's guns and that they now have no arms to protect themselves with.<sup>56</sup>

This is the context out of which the assaults inspired by Pontiac's leadership began, culminating in what is commonly called Pontiac's War.<sup>57</sup>

Pontiac's inspiration, however, was more successful in its outcome than the actual events. The French plan slowly came apart amid internal squabbles among the military and political leaders. Commandant Louis Joseph de Montcalm, Commander-in-Chief of the French forces in the colonies, denounced Kerlérec's plan of guerilla warfare. He pointed to the problems associated with the *Voyageurs* and *Coueurs du Bois*, asserting that the gifts required by the Indians would never reach the Natives for the skimming by "officers, storekeepers, [and] commissaries" would "impoverish" New France.<sup>58</sup> The facts bore out his fears. Unscrupulous French officials offered second rate goods to Pontiac's Indians and pocketed the difference. Further, the supply of goods to the Great Lakes region became too logistically complex after the fall of Canada and the English control of the Saint Lawrence River. The Mississippi River was the only avenue left for French shipments and even then the supplies had to be portaged to Detroit to reach Pontiac. Meanwhile, Pontiac's tribes were sacking all the British forts of the Appalachian region, taking them by trickery<sup>59</sup> and force. Only Fort Niagara, Fort Pitt, and Fort Detroit did not fall. British resiliency at these locales had more to do with the Peace of Paris (1763) and the failure of French reinforcements to arrive as promised, as opposed to Pontiac's lack of tactical skill.<sup>60</sup>

While Pontiac never attained ultimate victory, his actions demonstrated to the Europeans that his Indians had the power to punish even vaunted Old World powers. Among the Indians Pontiac's leadership was tentatively confirmed. He was articulate, successful, and straddled spiritual and political obligations as a skilled *Okama* should.

The same confirmation of his importance was also resolved in the minds of European leaders. But where they differed was on the proper means of handling this prominent chief. English traders and Indian agents wanted to utilize his position to their advantage, creating stability in the region by reaffirming Pontiac's centrality. But British military leaders saw the Ottawa chief as merely an obstinate warrior whose aggressiveness could only be dealt with by punitive means. The French assumed part of Pontiac's primacy was due to their instigation and feared the Indians threatened any lasting peace France made with England, so the Louisiana officials sought to placate the Algonquins only to learn Pontiac was beyond their ability to effectively control. Pontiac was a French loyalist, but his central status was one of his own creation.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mary Agnes Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy, 1763 (Detroit: Speaker-Hines, 1912), 28, 30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; Gladwyn to Johnson, 9 June 1764, Sir William Johnson, The Papers of Sir William Johnson, 15 vols. (Albany, NY: University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), 11: 228; John W. Jordan, ed., "Journal of James Kenny, 1761-1763" Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 37 (1913): 188. There is also a report of a ten year conversion plan. See the Report of Two Mohawks to Daniel Disney, Mayor of Detroit, 10 June 1764, Collections of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, 40 vols. (Lansing: Thorp and Godfrey and Others, 1874-1929), 27: 665.

<sup>3</sup> John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania, and the Neighboring States (Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876), 291-93.

<sup>4</sup> Villiers to D'Abbadie, 1 December 1763, Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 21 vols. (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, 1855-1911), 18: 260.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Jordan, ed., "Journal of James Kenny," 188.

<sup>7</sup> Reuben G. Thwaites and Louise P. Kellogg, Documentary History of Dunmore's War, 1774 (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905), 153; Bouquet to Francis and Clayton, 23 September 1764, Henry Bouquet, The Papers of Henry Bouquet, edited by S. K. Stevens and others, 15 vols. (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951), 13: 42; William L. Merrill, "The Beloved Tree, *Ilex Vomitoria* among the Indians of the Southeast and Adjacent Regions," in Charles Hudson, ed., Black Drink: A Native American Tea (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 40-83.

<sup>8</sup> Edmund A. DeSchweinitz, The Life and Times of David Zeisberger (Philadelphia: J. R. Lippincott and Company, 1871), 383; John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder, Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren (Philadelphia: McCarty and Davis, 1820), 104-105; David Zeisberger, Diary of David Zeisberger, a Moravian Missionary among the Indians of the Ohio, trans. and ed. by Eugene F. Bliss, (St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1972), 6, 608-9.

<sup>9</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 668. See also Thwaites and Kellogg, Documentary History of Dunmore's War, 153; Bouquet to Francis and Clayton, 23 September 1764, Bouquet Papers, 13: 42; Merrill, "The Beloved Tree," 40-83.

<sup>11</sup> Gladwyn to Johnson, 9 June 1764, Johnson Papers, 11: 228.

<sup>12</sup> Post's Journals, Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 32 vols. (Cleveland, OH: Clark Publishers, 1904-1907), 1: 215.

<sup>13</sup> Jordan, ed., "Journal of James Kenny," 171.

<sup>14</sup> Mooney, Ghost-Dance, 662-69; Henry R. Schoolcraft, Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1855), 2: 148-49; Johnson, Johnson Papers, 10: 505-6; Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1601-1791, 73 vols. (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Bros. Co., 1896-1901. Reprint, New York: Paget Book Company, 1959), *passim*; Villiers to D'Abbadie, 1 December 1763, Thwaites, ed., Wisconsin Collections, 18: 259-61; Melburn Delano Thurman, "The Delaware Indians: A Study in Ethnohistory," (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1973), 160. Thurman refers to Pontiac as the "empirical" leader of the Indian coalition.

<sup>15</sup> Captain Thomas Morris, Miscellanies in Prose and Verse (London: James Ridgway, 1791): 12.

<sup>16</sup> Sir William Johnson was at least one British official who understood the dynamics of Indian culture. He found himself at odds with his superiors and deluged with complaints from his field agents. Part of his undoing, however, was due to his attempt to use the Iroquois League as enforcers for British primacy among the western tribes. The Senecas also complicated the events relating to Pontiac's ascension. They had been circulating war Wampum among the western tribes before the Seven Years' War trying to enlist their neighbors in an attempt to oust the British. The Algonquins rejected the belts and even informed the British of the Seneca effort. A primary basis for this rejection was the cultural differences between the Algonquin related Ottawas opposing the Iroquois related Senecas historically and culturally. So, Pontiac's religious element, the first of its kind among Euro-Indian relations, afforded him the ability to reach beyond the factionalism that hampered Indian unity. Still, the fact that the Senecas joined Pontiac has a significant connection to their overriding personal hatred of the English. See: Francis Jennings, "The Indians' Revolution," In Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds., Major Problems in American Indian History (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1994), 171-85.

<sup>17</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy, 1763, 32. See also Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 38-40; Council in Illinois, 15-17 April 1764, General Thomas Gage, Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan (microfilm).

<sup>18</sup> Piquoté de Bellestre to Choiseul, 16 June 1762, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 358, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>19</sup> Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, 58: 295, 59: 315, 65: 272; Berryer to Bigot, 19 January 1759, John Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 10 vols. (Albany: Weed Parsons and Co., 1857), 10: 938.

<sup>20</sup> "Black Robes" was the generic term used by Algonquins for priests. See Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> Burton, ed. Journal of Pontiac, 18, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> Girault to Murray, 10 July 1763, reprinted in total in Waldo Edward L. Smith, "French Missionaries and the Pontiac Conspiracy, 1761-1763," Canadian Journal of Religious Thought 8 (1931): 290, emphasis added.

<sup>23</sup> Gage to Amherst 1762, Gage Papers; "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Michigan Collections, 27: 632.

<sup>24</sup> The Calumet or peace pipe was surrounded by sacred rituals and handled with reverential awe. There are even instances where amid battles the appearance of the Calumet caused a cessation of hostilities. See Emma H. Blair, ed., The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Region of the Great Lakes, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1911), 1: 185-86.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Rogers, Journals of Major Robert Rogers (New York: Readex Microprint Corporation, 1966), 219.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 214-20; Croghan Journals, Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 110-25

<sup>29</sup> Croghan Journals, Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 113.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Deposition of M. Jordeau at Detroit on 24 December 1763, Johnson Papers, 13: 317-21.

<sup>32</sup> Rogers, Journals, 221.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Deposition of M. Jordeau at Detroit on 24 December 1763, Johnson Papers, 13: 317-21. See also Croghan Journals, Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 110-25; Piquoté de Bellestre to Choiseul, 16 June 1762, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 358, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Rogers, A Concise Account of North America (London: 1765), 242.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 240-44; Croghan Journals, Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 110-25; Deposition of M. Jordeau at Detroit on 24 December 1763, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 13: 317-21; Piquoté de Bellestre to Choiseul, 16 June 1762, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 358. Originals in Paris, France. Copies in the Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Sir William Johnson's estate was eventually billed for these rituals when Lord Amherst was tightening the Crown's budget to recoup war losses. See Johnson Estate's Account of Goldsbro' Banyar, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 13: 529-563.

<sup>39</sup> Monckton to Bouquet, 5 April 1761, cited in Wilbur R. Jacobs, "Presents to the Indians as a Factor in the Conspiracy of Pontiac," Michigan History 33 (December 1949): 314.

<sup>40</sup> Croghan to Johnson, 10 May 1762, Johnson Papers, 3: 732-34.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 3 April 1763, Amherst Papers, Public Record Office, London, (microfilm), reel 30.

<sup>44</sup> Orders to Captain Dalyell, 3 January 1763, Johnson to Amherst, 21 January 1763, Amherst to Johnson, 3 April 1763, Johnson to Amherst, 21 January 1763, Amherst Papers, reels 30, 31; Amherst to Bouquet, 16 February 1763, Michigan Collections, 19: 178; Amherst to Johnson, 3 April 1763, Johnson Estate's Account of Goldsbro' Banyar, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 13: 529-563.

<sup>45</sup> "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Michigan Collections, 27: 632.

<sup>46</sup> Amherst even personally insulted Miami and Shawnee chiefs who went to warn him of Pontiac's threat by berating them and then destroying Wampum belts offered him. This

prompted these tribes to support Pontiac more resolutely. See Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 286.

<sup>47</sup> Orders to Captain Dalyell, 3 January 1763, Johnson to Amherst, 21 January 1763, 3 April 1763, Amherst Papers, Public Record Office, London, (microfilm), reels 30, 31; Amherst to Bouquet, 16 February 1763, Michigan Collections, 19: 178; Amherst to Johnson, 3 April 1763, Johnson Estate's Account of Goldsbroow Banyar, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 13: 529-563.

<sup>48</sup> G. Bancroft, History of the United States of America From the Discovery of the Continent, (New York: 1884), 3: 463.

<sup>49</sup> Siuer de Jumilhac's Instructions, 1762, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series B (Louisiane: Correspondance envoyée, ordres du roy), vol. 114, folio 154, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Burton, ed. Journal of Pontiac, 36.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Commander at Fort Detroit was no longer Major Robert Rogers but Major Henry Gladwin, a man more loyal to Amherst.

<sup>55</sup> Burton, ed. Journal of Pontiac, 38.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 38-40.

<sup>57</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 36-40; Franklin B. Hough, ed., Diary of the Siege of Detroit (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1860), 3.

<sup>58</sup> Montcalm to Normand, 12 April 1759, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 10: 962-66.

<sup>59</sup> A colorful aside was the taking of Fort Michilimackinac by the Ojibway. The men assembled outside of the fort to play a game of lacrosse. The women sat by the fort wall wrapped in robes. As the British troops collected along the top of the wall to watch, the Ojibways sent the ball over, into the fort as if by accident. The soldiers inside retrieved the ball, opened the fort's gate, then gave it back to the Indians to continue playing. On the third such "accident," when the British troops opened the door the women of the Ojibways opened their robes concealing the warriors' weapons. The Ojibways seized their weapons, then charged the fort resulting in a very bloody and humiliating loss for

the British. Pontiac attempted a similar deception. He entered Fort Detroit under pretense of negotiations along with a contingent of warriors and women, again wrapped in robes concealing weapons. He was to hand Major Henry Gladwin a Wampum belt, green on one side and white on the other. If and when Pontiac flipped the belt to the green side, the warriors were supposed to strike. Pontiac never flipped the belt because Gladwin had made sure a huge assembly of troops surrounded him with rifles readied. It is also of note that in all of the Indian attacks through 1763 only British troops or civilians were targeted. Frenchmen were left unmolested. Also, those Jesuits under Amherst's sway were successful in persuading at least their personal flocks from participating in the assaults on forts. See Thomas Mante, The History of the Late War in North-America, and the Islands of the West-Indies, Including the Campaigns of 1763 and 1764 Against His Majesty's Indian Enemies (London: Printed for W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1772), 40; Francis Parkman, The Conspiracy of Pontiac, 2 vols., (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 1: 336-41; Howard H. Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising (New York: Russell and Russell, 1970), 132, 163.

<sup>60</sup> Mémoire treating Indian affairs in Illinois, 3 October 1763, Deposition of Charlot Casqué, 27 October 1763, de Villiers to Pontiac, October 1763, Speech of the Iroquois, Loups, and Shawnees..., 9 November 1763, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 410, 416-18, 447-48, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### WAKING UP FROM THE DREAM: THE DIPLOMATIC CENTRALITY OF PONTIAC AMID SHIFTING EUROPEAN POLICIES

While Indian and European peoples each placed Pontiac at the center of affairs during this era, efforts to neutralize the Ottawa chief's demonstrable power still guided crown officials' actions. France and England worked together, as the Peace of Paris tacitly proscribed, and their efforts were consistently met with failures. It took a series of blunders on the part of British military leaders to finally illustrate Pontiac's necessary importance to create a last sense of stability in the Great Lakes region and use this fact to their advantage. But by the time the English were ready to negotiate with the Ottawa chief, the real source of Pontiac's prominent position, his Indian supporters, were regressing into their divisive ways. The Ottawa chief's centrality thus waned, but was never fully dissolved. Being a capable *Okama* he relied on his political cunning to retain a small, but loyal following, and this new political direction was met by the endeavors of British agents who finally had the opportunity to utilize Pontiac's position to their advantage. The Europeans and the Algonquins were finally returning to at least a diplomatic understanding and Pontiac was the conduit for peace and stability.

As the peace agreement between France and England was finalized and the transfer of power was slowly occurring, the French officials knew they would have difficulty aborting the plan they had hatched with their Indian allies. The quickest

solution to expedite the process of demilitarization was quieting the Ottawa chief who had the most military prowess and political capital at his disposal. When the initial request to halt the offensive reached Pontiac, the war chief merely responded with a demand for the troops promised him by Kerlérec. While the commandant of the Illinois district, Neyon de Villiers, sincerely wanted to continue the operations as Kerlérec had designed, he was under new orders. The circumstances were reminiscent of the policy shift and subsequent turmoil that grew out of the clashes between British policy makers and their field agents. Jean-Jacques Blaise d'Abbadie replaced Kerlérec as Governor of Louisiana because he was more amenable to the will of his superiors. D'Abbadie was ignorant of the manner in which tribal diplomacy operated. Much like the British high command, he simply assumed that his Indian allies lived at the pleasure of their French Father. De Villiers complained to his commander about Amherst's tardy notification of both the cessation of hostilities and the ratification of the peace treaty because the guerilla assaults were planned and initiated in the interim. He attempted to explain to d'Abbadie that he was not granted adequate time to stop the campaign begun by Pontiac. Eventually a bitter note was dispatched to Amherst stating that "I [de Villiers] have every reason to fear that things have been carried to the point where it will be difficult to appease them [the Indians]."<sup>1</sup>

By this time Pontiac's followers had won virtually every engagement against the British forces, but the fickle loyalty of the French threatened his endeavors as much as his sieges had threatened the peace treaty. D'Abbadie ordered a recall of his troops in the northern region and ambassadors were sent among Pontiac's coalition using "speeches, calumets, and wampum" in an effort to restrain the Indian warriors.<sup>2</sup> But a curious



display witnessed by British officials showed, in a symbolic and cultural manner, just what the Ottawa chief thought of his association with France. A meeting between Pontiac and British officials was arranged to conduct diplomatic negotiations and was held at the home of a Frenchman named Antoine Cuillerier. Cuillerier was the half-brother to the old commandant of Fort Detroit, François de Bellestre, whom Pontiac's people had ousted and ridiculed during the earlier English takeover of the outpost. The British officials took particular notice of what they regarded as the insolent conduct the Frenchman directed toward these representatives of the English crown. He was but a common trader, possessing literally no standing among the French establishment, yet he remained seated as the British delegation entered the room and kept his head "covered during the entire Congress."<sup>3</sup> The reason for this Frenchmen's lack of deference became clear as the negotiations proceeded. Pontiac instructed his French associate to conduct himself in this manner to demonstrate to the Englishmen that the Ottawa chief recognized Cuillerier "as his Father come to life and as the commandant of Detroit untill the arrival of his Brother [Bellestre]."<sup>4</sup>

There was a dual political and spiritual significance in Pontiac's actions. First, politically he was declaring that France was the only legitimate power he recognized on Indian lands, and even then such recognition only emanated from the sovereign will of those tribes in the Great Lakes region as expressed through their corporate leader, Pontiac. Second, the Ottawa *Okama's* phrase "Father come to life" carried with it all of the spiritual assumptions of Algonquin culture. Cuillerier was symbolically adopted as a replacement for his brother, Bellestre, with all of the prestige and rank earned by the original member. De Villiers was fully cognizant of the cultural expression witnessed by

the English officials, but he encountered little patience or understanding from his superior when attempting to explain. D'Abbadie dispatched a messenger to Pontiac. The envoy, called Jordeau, stated, in clear and direct fashion to the Ottawa leader, the Europeans' appraisal of his diplomatic situation by "putting three<sup>5</sup> of his *fingers close*, Shewing him, as the three great Kings had now made Peace, that, in *Attacking* the English, it was attacking the whole."<sup>6</sup> Pontiac already had some knowledge of the Peace of Paris, but he never accepted its validity. He had already agreed to begin his portion of the Franco-Indian offensive and the Ottawa war chief became even more resolved to continue his campaign after his initial successes. His purpose in conducting negotiations was simple yet manipulative. If Pontiac could not induce French aid by force, perhaps he could entice it by lure.<sup>7</sup>

As a skillful *Okama*, Pontiac remained diplomatically supple in his quest for materiel and men, so he utilized the complaints of the *habitants* throughout the Detroit area to make an attempt at garnering *Onontio*'s support. The French colonists held a mixed feeling with regard to the behavior of their Indian neighbors, and their concerns became acute as the campaign bogged down around the walls of the English forts. Admittedly they were somewhat culpable for instigating the activities of the Native coalition inasmuch as they corroborated rumors of their king's pending return. But when French supplies were withheld—the only means of administrative control exerted over Pontiac's war efforts—and the Natives resorted to commandeering supplies from the French colonials, the *habitants* shrank from their obligations as brothers to the Algonquins. The colonists complained to the chief that his followers would "enter [their] homes...with the tomahawk raised as if you intend to kill us while begging for food."<sup>8</sup>

They also berated Pontiac over his penchant for butchering their livestock to consume while wasting half the carcass. They asked him, “When [the cattle] are all killed how do you think we shall be able to plow our fields, to sow and make bread for you?”<sup>9</sup> Pontiac could not afford to lose the supplies secured from the *habitants*. They remained the main source of food for his people and comprised the only tie to *Onontio* left on which he could tug for France’s attention. As they admonished him that they were “brothers” under the same French Father and that the “domineering” behavior on the part of his followers would only lead to their being regarded as “rebellious children and traitors,” Pontiac carefully couched his retort in a sympathetic tone. He agreed that some of his men had taken liberties with the colonists’ possessions, but he also asserted the reverse was true. He reiterated, staying true to the religious parameters defining his activities, that “it is not for personal vengeance that I am making war upon the English.” Rather, Pontiac pointed to the “insults” the English had leveled at the Indians in councils, the reality that the British military authorities disarmed the *habitants*, and that he alone stood as the sole counterbalance to English domination in the absence of *Onontio*. Pontiac reminded them of the protection he had offered during assaults by the Sac and Fox earlier. Further, he too used the fear of a returning French Father in declaring that he knew some of the settlers secretly desired English rule, working to have it come to fruition, and that the identities of those individuals whose loyalty was in doubt would be given to *Onontio*. He stated flatly that he did “not demand your [*habitant*] assistance, because [he knew they] could not give it.”<sup>10</sup> He asked only for “provisions for myself and my followers.”<sup>11</sup> But throughout his discussion with the *habitants*, Pontiac began lacing in subtle political ploys in an attempt to instigate *Onontio*’s reactions.<sup>12</sup>

If French aid would not come to the Indians, perhaps aid would come to French colonists, the practical result of which would be the funneling of supplies to those Indians laying siege to English forts. Pontiac told the *habitants*: “I am French, and I want to die French, and I repeat that it is altogether your interests and mine that I avenge.”<sup>13</sup> In comparing their experience and loyalty, Pontiac next attempted to link their future. After admitting that he could not demand the colonials’ assistance, he did state coyly if they would offer such military service he “would not refuse” and that such a concerted effort would “get out the trouble quicker.”<sup>14</sup> The *habitants* relented with considerable trepidation. The Ottawa chief assumed a continued show of military prowess would keep him central to Euro-Indian affairs.<sup>15</sup>

Evidence of this plan by Pontiac to entice his French Father’s return is most clearly seen in two letters dispatched from Detroit—one from French colonists, the other from Pontiac himself. The note from the *habitants* speaks to their being placed in the middle of the diplomatic interplay between Pontiac and the French governor, Jean-Jacques d’Abbadie. They wrote to the governor that they were “obliged to submit to what the Indians exact[ed]...the English are blocked up, and all the passages are shut up.”<sup>16</sup> Adding that the situation created great “perplexity” within them, they asked their leaders to come see “with their own eyes what was going on” and that it seemed as if “God alone can prevent our becoming the victims of the English and savages.”<sup>17</sup>

Pontiac’s letter to Governor d’Abbadie contained the same artful rhetoric he used against the *habitants*. Addressing it to fellow “prisoners” of the English, the Ottawa chief stated from the outset he was willing to “adopt” the English “as brethren” should they not “deceive so many nations.”<sup>18</sup> Gratitude was also extended to his French neighbors so that

*Onontio* might see Pontiac's loyalty. He stated sincerely "without the help of the French merchants who gave us credit and without some small reserves which we had for buying our fall needs, we would have been lost."<sup>19</sup> But Pontiac repeatedly feigned ignorance as to the reason why his French Father was not writing him. He stated that he could not believe the English declaration that they were "masters of all these lands that belonged to your father, for we have conquered him."<sup>20</sup> Reminding the French leaders of Indian sovereignty in the affairs of state, Pontiac then spoke of the Lenapés initiating the anti-British sentiment, which in turn comprised the exclusionary and visionary foundation upon which he conducted his activities. He even offered a remark given him by the Lenapés as evidence. With regard to their fear that the British intended to kill all of the Natives, the Lenapés told the Ottawas "let us die together, since the design of the English is to destroy us. We are dead one way or another."<sup>21</sup> Pontiac asserted that it was then that the Indians decided "to fall in here at Detroit" and Bellestre's parting words that "the English today overthrow your father. As long as they have the upper hand you will not have what you stand in need of; but this will not last," only put the French and Indians in common cause.<sup>22</sup> Pontiac closed his letter to *Onontio* by explaining the reason for his activities. It was because "we [the Indians] do not want the English to hold these lands, this is what causes your children to rise and strike everywhere."<sup>23</sup> In this statement, d'Abbadie heard why his messengers were ignored and informed why the Indian attacks erupted and would continue until Pontiac decided they were over. The French Father's presence was being summoned back into the region he abandoned by the very people he had surrendered to the whims of his British adversaries. The enticement had no effect, but Pontiac continued in his Francophile ways.<sup>24</sup>

Though the French and English officials were attempting to isolate Pontiac and bring him into subjection, their efforts had no effect until the *habitants* finally withdrew their direct support. The Ottawa war chief grew impatient as *Onontio* tarried and French informants throughout the region betrayed the Indians' tactical efforts. His solution was to make the French colonials "by force or friendship...take up hostilities."<sup>25</sup> Pontiac summoned the heads of French families and accused them of "abetting [the English] to our hurt."<sup>26</sup> He intoned the will of the Master of Life with regard to the divine command to drive the English from the region to sanctify his harder line. Pontiac then concluded his tirade with an ultimatum, demanding the *habitants* "either remain French as we [the Indians] are, or altogether English as they are."<sup>27</sup> A spokesman for the colonists responded to the *Okama* saying Pontiac, if he could, "must remove...the bonds which tie our hands and which the Father of the French and the Father of the English have knotted about us as the only hindrance to...accepting [Pontiac's] war-belt."<sup>28</sup> To these French settlers, their hearts were with the Francophile Indians, but their minds were reconciling the reality of Britain's victory. There was a distinct difference in motivations between those of Pontiac's Indians and those of the *habitants*. The former were fighting for homeland, ideology, and even spirituality. The latter might be fighting for homes and family, but those possessions would easily survive a change in authority and bureaucracy if they proved themselves docile subjects. What they needed from Pontiac was some assurance that if they followed his aggressive lead a reward awaited them regardless of outcome. Pontiac could not offer such a promise. Consequently the *habitants* produced a document from their king ordering his subjects to "remain quiet in [their] houses, for he alone wishes to deliver [them]."<sup>29</sup> They reminded Pontiac that he, too, had promised to

wait for *Onontio*'s return. But the Ottawa was still bent on precipitating that development. Furthermore, Pontiac was, by virtue of Neolin's vision, the deliverer of his people, not *Onontio*. The French colonials were awaiting the return of their own leader whom they believed just as sincerely would "when he comes...deliver us."<sup>30</sup>

Pontiac's siege, and thereby his powerful position, was virtually undermined by the neutrality of the *habitants*. The most the Ottawa leader could glean from his French neighbors was a "vagabond" lot of young, single men who vowed allegiance to the Indian leader because they had nothing at risk.<sup>31</sup> The remaining colonists were "very much grieved" by their pugnacious countrymen.<sup>32</sup> Pontiac held no ill will toward the neutrals; he shook their hands as they retired from his council. But the *habitants* were "filled with anger" at the force Pontiac displayed and their malice toward those French who sided with the Indians was apparent to all, even prompting the Frenchmen to remain with their Native associates because no colonist "would receive them into his home."<sup>33</sup> As the tension lingered and Pontiac tried to figure out what he was going to do to entice *Onontio*'s renewed presence the father of one of the Frenchmen who joined Pontiac approached the chief to obtain his son's safe return. He confronted the chief boldly asking, "Have you lost your mind? Why [use]...young men who have no sense and who are going to come here in tears to deny what they have said? They will kill thee perhaps."<sup>34</sup> The inexperience of many of the French who joined with Pontiac was obviously a concern to both those families who loved them as well as to a war chief who needed hardened soldiers to launch any worthwhile assault upon the English. Pontiac never assessed his new troops' abilities and the concern in this regard was shown in his response to the *habitant* father. The *Okama* "listen[ed] very attentively to what the

Frenchman had just told him. 'Thou art right, my brother,' he replied, 'and I thank thee for the warning thou hast given me.'"<sup>35</sup> Pontiac ordered the young *habitants* to their homes and never again pressed the French colonials to become involved.<sup>36</sup>

The siege inevitably had negative effects on Pontiac's Indian coalition members as he struggled to maintain his centrality. Through the year-long stalemate, Pontiac's followers reverted to the comfortable factions and behaviors that had divided them prior to Neolin's unifying vision as tangible successes were no longer forthcoming, and Pontiac as a "chosen" leader was coming into question. Shipments of brandy and rum were seized amongst the supplies meant for the forts. Though the Master of Life forbade excessive consumption of alcohol, many Natives found an outlet for pent up boredom in drunken binges. Too often reckless aggression accompanied the spirits. Many of the people under Pontiac's command engaged in tribal brawls while inebriated and still others resorted to attacking French and English settlers, even murdering prisoners retained for ransom and bargain.<sup>37</sup>

Pontiac attempted to handle each of these developments as they occurred, but at times his hypocrisy was exposed. One such incident involved the Ojibway chief, Kinonchamek, who came down to Detroit from northern Michigan to address the coalition tribes meeting with the Ottawa leader. After capturing the English fort at Michilimackinac, Pontiac demanded and received the captives taken by Kinonchamek's men and turned them over to *Onontio* at Quebec in an effort to forestall any reprisals. Pontiac had not ordered the assault, therefore, he did not want any unwarranted blame heaped upon him. Kinonchamek brought his loyalty in this matter to Pontiac's attention to lend some cultural legitimacy to his verbal upbraiding of the Ottawa leader. The



Ojibway accused Pontiac before the members of the council of ignoring the commands of the Master of Life, assaulting the French *habitants*, and even murdering British prisoners. He told Pontiac that his actions were putting the Indians “in danger of incurring the reproaches of our Great Father when he shall come.”<sup>38</sup> Rightly rebuked, Pontiac appeared “in the face of this speech...like a child surprised in some fault with no excuse to give, and he did not know what to say.”<sup>39</sup> The council ended and Pontiac was aware that he was steadily allowing temporal, political debates to draw him into their tangles. The further he drifted from the spiritual nature of his mission, the deeper the factions among his followers grew. Following the heavy casualties taken in the Battle of Bloody Run near Fort Detroit, the Battle of Bushy Run near Fort Pitt, and a failed assault on a sloop, the *Michigan*, along the Detroit River, many of the tribes under Pontiac’s sway hinted that they were going to seek terms for a separate peace. French apathy, British hostility, and Indian disharmony surrounded the Ottawa chief personally much like he had done to the fort at Detroit. Futility was the most difficult lesson for Pontiac to internalize on a personal level, but as an *Okama* he had always sought out and acted in the best interests of his people when those interests became clear to him.<sup>40</sup>

The turmoil experienced by Pontiac’s coalition prompted many of its members to seek out the Ottawa chief for answers, which served to keep him central to the transfer of territorial claims between the French and English because it kept his number of supporters high, thus his military threat and political vitality high. Pontiac, aware of the realities involved, sent a message of his own to the commander of Fort Detroit, Major Henry Galdwin, with the duties of an *Okama* informing his thoughts as well as his growing sense of the futility of warfare guiding his new course of conduct.

My Brother,

The word which my father has sent me to make peace I have accepted; all my young men have buried their hatchets. I think you will forget the bad things which have taken place for some time past. Likewise I shall forget what you may have done to me, in order to think of nothing but good. I, the Chippewas, the Hurons, we are ready to speak with you when you ask us. Give us an answer. I am sending this resolution to you in order that you may see it. If you are as kind as I, you will make me a reply. I wish you a good day.

Pontiac.<sup>41</sup>

The Ottawa leader was bound to care for his people and respect their wishes; a prolongation of conflict was simply too much to demand of his followers for they would surely leave him. An *Okama* did not enjoy the luxury of those coercive tools necessary to make them stay. Gladwin responded to Pontiac that he did not have the authority to discuss peace with the Indians and that he would have to wait for Lord Amherst to present the Natives with England's terms of reconciliation. The commander knew he had the advantage given Pontiac's internal woes. The Ottawa chief quickly surmised this and balked at Gladwin's invitation to wait. Instead, Pontiac took what remained of his followers and headed south to establish residence along the banks of the Maumee River near the present-day city of Toledo, Ohio.<sup>42</sup>

What occurred during those events which can properly be called Pontiac's War comprised more than a simple military defeat; rather it can be more accurately described as a literal loss of faith in the *Okama's* leadership. In narrow, tribal terms an *Okama* is supposed to display capability in battle as well as provide sustenance for his people. Pontiac enjoyed such a charismatic appeal until the offensive stalled around the European strongholds. The Indians had not experienced this style of combat before and had not yet developed any dependable manner in which to challenge these obstacles. Furthermore, as the sources of supply were reduced, Pontiac no longer had the capacity to provide for his

followers and his status as *Okama* thus came under close scrutiny from within. But on a larger, pan-tribal scale Pontiac's legitimacy for leading the coalition was called into question by virtue of the lack of the phenomenological elements promised within the vision he utilized. If the Master of Life had spoken to the Ottawa chief, he was obliged to demonstrate the validity of his claims by fulfilling the prophecy. Pontiac was committed, spiritually and politically, to drive the English from Indian lands as well as protect Native adherents from any temporal harms that might befall them. With Pontiac stymied around forts Pitt, Niagara, and Detroit, his followers began to question whether there truly was any sacred power behind his leadership. Heavy casualties, and Amherst's subsequent spread of smallpox through infested blankets placed among those tribes involved in the sieges, only gave credence to doubts regarding Pontiac's heavenly mandate.<sup>43</sup>

Despite Pontiac's waning status, the political affairs that embroiled him were enough to keep him central to any diplomatic solutions concocted by European power brokers. The lifting of the sieges brought with it the end of the silence *Onontio* practiced with regard to his Algonquin children. Neyon de Villiers was granted permission to summon Pontiac for talks at Fort de Chartres in the Illinois Territory still controlled by the French. The Ottawa had taken to hunting in the west following his relocation along the Maumee because of the quantity of game, the unwavering allegiance of the Illinois Indians, and the presence of Ottawa relatives intermarried with the Illinois tribes. Pontiac and de Villiers met only once. Their brief conversation was filled with tension and threat as the French continued to try and assuage any concerns the Algonquins had over the transfer of *Onontio* status to the English. Asserting that he "speaks for all" the Indians, Pontiac asked for the French king to "take pity on us. We hope that the Master of Life

will inspire him with something favorable for us. If our prayers are fulfilled, we hope to see again...Bellestre."<sup>44</sup> Pontiac continued by stating that the English were "liars" and that his people would rather "die slaves or at the foot of the tree for want of succor" than suffer the English among them.<sup>45</sup> A promise was given to the French that the Indians would restore their power and prestige if only they could depend upon goods and munitions. Pontiac closed his appeal with a final attempt to stay on what little common spiritual ground remained to him. He declared that the Master of Life "put arms in our hands, and it is he who has ordered us to fight against this bad meat that would come and infest our lands."<sup>46</sup> Again, the sovereignty of Indian action as well as their desire for *Onontio*'s return was asserted. The Ottawa chief added that "if I was the first Red Man that held this opinion thou might say Pontiac is a liar but...all the nations of the Continent hold this discourse.... Think then my Father that thou goest against the orders of the Master of Life & that all the red Men conform to his will, Thus I pray thee to talk no more of a Peace with the English, because I hate them."<sup>47</sup> De Villiers's response was predictable. Pontiac interrupted his words regarding peace with the English, reiterating his hatred for the English. De Villiers defiantly finished his comments concerning the peace pact between the Europeans. Pontiac ended the council by offering a veiled threat which was merely a simple truth regarding those events that lay ahead. The Ottawa war chief stated, "Be easy, my father, I will not spill blood upon thy lands. What I will spill shall be upon the water of thy river, which the current will wash away."<sup>48</sup> The implication here was that the fight around Detroit was over, but a renewal of hostilities would naturally progress from the British forces moving westward toward the Mississippi River which the French still controlled. De Villiers wanted to continue the talks after

Pontiac calmed down, but the Ottawa chief did not accept his invitation and returned to his home in the Ohio country. He circulated new war belts among the tribes in the Ohio Valley as well as those in the Illinois Territory. But certain developments arising from additional British policy shifts and unhappy coalition members quickly undercut Pontiac's ambition to entice *Onontio*'s return.<sup>49</sup>

Two opposing factors shaped British policy: Lord Jeffrey Amherst's desire to punish the Indian nations and the reality that the losses incurred during Pontiac's War prevented him from fulfilling that desire. Amherst was being rotated out of North America and back to England for a period of time in 1764. Before his departure he told his replacement, Thomas Gage, "I am determined to go through with it in such a manner that the whole race of Indians who have any connection with the English may see the folly and madness, as well as the ingratitude of setting themselves in opposition to a people from whom they have received so many benefits."<sup>50</sup> Gage agreed in spirit with his outgoing commander. He formally asked Henry Bouquet twice to create a list of "Promoters of the War" which he wanted to see "put to death."<sup>51</sup> Chief among those on this list were Pontiac and Neolin.<sup>52</sup>

A punitive expedition was sent west led by Colonel John Bradstreet, himself an Indian foe albeit less rancorous.<sup>53</sup> He vowed to have Pontiac "be given up to be sent down to the country and maintained at His Majesty's expense the remainder of his days."<sup>54</sup> Calls for recruits were sent out to several colonial governments including New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, but the heavy losses incurred throughout the Indian wars, particularly after the defeat at Bloody Run and the pyrrhic victory at Bushy Run, resulted in steep demands. The colonies allocated resources and mustered what they

could, but Bradstreet admitted even “if the whole were of the best Troops his Majesty has, the Number is far from being equal to [the] Service.”<sup>55</sup> Consequently, Bradstreet’s mission to capture and kill as many of Pontiac’s warriors as possible turned into a treaty campaign wherein the colonel sought to neutralize as many tribes as he could still under the Ottawa chief’s sway.<sup>56</sup>

The piecemeal attempt to whittle away at the Indian coalition made many English bureaucrats feel as if they were accomplishing their goal of establishing hegemony, but Pontiac’s allegiance among the western tribes remained strong as British policy broke into the familiar schism between military officials and Indian agents. Bradstreet reached the vicinity of Detroit and was forced to divide his troops among the two main forts of the Michigan Territory, Detroit and Michilimackinac, to retain British control and emanate royal power from these locales. But the thin dispersal of soldiers, coupled with Bradstreet’s own timidity in the field, prompted the English official to seek out the individual Indian nations for treaties. Many conferences were held throughout the region, most notably at Presque Isle and Detroit, where the devious colonel convinced many of the Great Lakes peoples to surrender their prisoners, cede their land, and recognize that King George had the “sole right of sovereignty over all and every part of this country ”<sup>57</sup> Upon hearing the news of the peace treaties negotiated by Bradstreet, Thomas Gage was outraged. Bradstreet had disobeyed his orders as well as showed a flagrant disregard for administrative protocol. No formal transfer of official powers occurred between Amherst and Gage because the former had expected to return shortly. So, the only British official with the power to draft and sign binding agreements between the Indian nations and the English Crown was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson. Johnson,

for his part, tried to finesse the issue to draw Gage into a more affable mood, hoping that the general would allow him to do what Amherst would not: negotiate a meaningful peace with Pontiac on Indian terms. Privately Johnson said of Bradstreet's treaty, "I dread its consequences, as I recollect that some attempts toward Sovereignty [over the Indians] not long ago was one of the principal causes of all our troubles."<sup>58</sup> But formally the Indian Superintendent blamed some of the terms on "the Ignorance of the Interpreter or from some other mistake."<sup>59</sup> Johnson told Gage that the Indians could "never mean or intend...[to] be brought under our Laws...nor would they convey the most distant idea of subjection."<sup>60</sup> If the plan went through Johnson feared that it would "produce infinite harm" for the Algonquins could be "very dangerous neighbors."<sup>61</sup>

Gage retained confidence in his subordinate's abilities in the field at least briefly and allowed Bradstreet to renew his campaign to punish Pontiac's followers, but the colonel returned such faith with continued incompetence and entrenching Pontiac in his loyalty to the French. Bradstreet meandered throughout the Great Lakes region in a vain and comical attempt to find the promoters of war among the tribes he encountered. Eventually, his travels plunged him deep into the forests and waters of Michigan which he could not navigate. He returned to Detroit and dispatched Captain Thomas Morris with a small detachment of troops and two French guides in an effort to find Pontiac. While Morris was unable to find the Ottawa chief, Pontiac did find the captain. The Indian warriors surrounded the British squad where they meant to kill the interlopers; only the sight of Frenchmen among the red coats gave Pontiac pause and eventually led to Morris's being invited into Pontiac's village.<sup>62</sup>

The captain's account of what he saw was full of the same symbolic significance witnessed by the British negotiators at Fort Detroit during the siege of 1763. Morris was "astonished to see a great number of white flags flying," which did not constitute banners of surrender but were rather representations of the *drapeau blanc* of the French military.<sup>63</sup> Pontiac had commented to French officials before that his people's "hearts will be sore so long as we see the Red Flag [of England] over our land—we who have always loved the White [of France]."<sup>64</sup> During the meeting, Morris witnessed Pontiac in command of a cadre of European *aides-de-camp*, most prominent among them was one called Jacques St. Vincent who "by his dress and air" the British captain believed was a French officer.<sup>65</sup> As the meeting progressed it was apparent that the Frenchman was the new surrogate for *Onontio* following Antoine Cullierer's departure.<sup>66</sup> Throughout the cordial meeting St. Vincent constantly remained at a subordinate position relative to Pontiac, speaking to the continued belief of the sovereignty of Indian nations in the Ottawa's mind and the fact that the French king did not dominate them as the English king desired to do.<sup>67</sup>

Morris stayed with Pontiac for a few days then returned with word to Bradstreet that the Ottawa remained a French ally, but, contrary to British perception, he was "quite tractable."<sup>68</sup> The Ottawa chief told Morris, "I will lead the nations to war no more; let 'em be at peace, if they chuse it: but I myself will never be a friend to the English. I shall now become a wanderer in the woods; and if they come to seek me there, while I have an arrow left, I will shoot at them."<sup>69</sup> But, the captain added, "people driven to despair are capable of everything and that by leaving room for repentance we often make a zealous Friend of an inveterate enemy."<sup>70</sup> His point was self-evident; he had stayed among Pontiac's inner circle and received the chief's personal protection.<sup>71</sup>



Another symbolic act on the part of Pontiac's spiritual advisor, Katapelleecy, also provided Morris with justification for this belief. The Ottawa leader spoke to the English captain saying that he did not dream anything negative concerning the soldier's intentions since his arrival at the Indian settlement. Katapelleecy warned him that had his sleep been anything but restful, Morris would be dead. The Ottawa then departed and returned "dressed in a lace scarlet coat with blue cuffs, and a laced hat."<sup>72</sup> Morris "wondered more at the colour of the cloaths than at the finery; and was told that it was a present from... Sir William Johnson."<sup>73</sup> Katapelleecy had conducted the superintendent to his initial meetings with Pontiac at Detroit during the process of the English takeover of the fort.<sup>74</sup>

Following this display, the Ottawa leader stated flatly that "the English were liars" but he asked whether Morris's desire for peace was sincere, requiring a demonstration of such good intentions by a promise of gifts of clothing for Pontiac's Indians.<sup>75</sup> Morris assured Katapelleecy as well as Pontiac that his intentions were noble and that the English sought only harmony with their former adversaries. The demonstration was clear to Captain Morris. Pontiac trusted Johnson by virtue of his respectful actions and observance of Indian protocol in the practice of gift giving, but the chief did not hold such faith in the English establishment. As an *Okama*, Pontiac was obliged to act in the best interests of his people, thus this demonstration of his willingness to work out an agreement with the one trustworthy official he encountered, Sir William Johnson. But personally, Pontiac was not obliged to mind any such democratic notions. He was and would remain a French loyalist. His recalcitrance stood in direct correlation to that of England's. Morris tacitly agreed with Johnson that "Pontiac might be made a

faithful Subject of the King of England and become of infinite Service” should the English administration see fit to extend to him their hand in friendship. The captain returned to Detroit with a belt of peace offered by Pontiac to Bradstreet as confirmation of Morris’s evaluation.<sup>76</sup>

With this assessment of Pontiac’s temperament as well as the chief’s noble offering, Bradstreet, while in council with other Indian chiefs, proceeded to deliver a monumental affront to Native sensibilities. He picked up a hatchet, carved the belt of peace into bits, then cast its remnants into the Detroit River. The Indians present viewed the colonel’s actions coolly. Pontiac eventually heard of Bradstreet’s insult and immediately stitched together an even larger war-belt than the one he had circulated at the outset of his call for Indian unity. This new belt, over six feet in length, rekindled the Indians’ determination to oust the British from their lands and was circulated through the tribes in the Illinois Territory.<sup>77</sup>

Evidence of the chaos Bradstreet had created surrounded every council where he was present. The old intertribal rivalries and intratribal factions resulted in the violence familiar among the Great Lakes people before they fell under Neolin’s unifying theology. The affair culminated in a ghastly incident nearly impossible for British diplomats to gloss over or traditional Indians to try to comprehend. Two rival chiefs argued so bitterly in front of the English commander that their quarrel caused each to draw a knife after which they “stabb’d each other, in such a manner that their Lives are despaired of.”<sup>78</sup> Bradstreet was causing immense problems while still not fulfilling his assigned duties.<sup>79</sup>

Thomas Gage was clearly lost as to how to reconcile Captain John Bradstreet’s incompetence, Pontiac’s contentious mood, and Sir William Johnson’s knowing

commentary. The commander finally let Johnson send his subordinates west in an attempt to bring order to the chaos Bradstreet created, and the man they focused upon was Pontiac. Gage said of Pontiac he was “not only... a Savage, possessed of the most refined Cunning and treachery... but a person of extraordinary Abilities. Pontiac keeps two Secretaries, one to write for him, and the other to read the letters he receives, & he manages them so, as to keep each of them ignorant of what is transacted by the other.”<sup>80</sup> He has maintained “as much influence as ever” over the tribes and could “manage them as he pleases.”<sup>81</sup> In short, “Pontiac should, if possible, be gained to our interest.”<sup>82</sup> Johnson agreed saying “this fellow shou’d be gained to our Interest or knocked in the head. He has great Abilities, but his Savage Cruelty destroys the regard we should otherwise have for him.”<sup>83</sup>

Each now acknowledged Pontiac’s centrality, although late in the affair, and planned to co-opt the Ottawa chief to serve the crown’s interests seeing that the leader could not be effectively neutralized through combat. George Croghan was immediately dispatched and his earlier appraisal that the Indians believed “the French had no Right to give away their Country; as, they Say, they were never Conquered by any Nation” guided his endeavors.<sup>84</sup> The trader was an old, trusted friend of Pontiac and he knew the Ottawa’s spirit. He noted that Pontiac “commands more respect among those Nations (in Illinois), than any Indian I ever saw could do amongst his own Tribe.”<sup>85</sup> He wanted desperately to find Pontiac fast before the dire circumstances worsened, for the Indians he encountered now “preferred dying to making peace with the British.”<sup>86</sup> The entire situation was reminiscent of the French who tried to curtail Pontiac’s activities. The failure to recognize the Ottawa chief as a guarantor of peace and stability was the reason

all of the conflicting parties found themselves in this diplomatic morass. What Johnson and Croghan did not know, though, was that forces outside their control were conspiring against their desire to accept Pontiac's centrality and finally use it to their advantage.<sup>87</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> de Villiers to d'Abbadie, 1 December 1763, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 13a (Louisiane: Correspondance générale), vol. 43, folio 353-55, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. 105, folio 353-55.

<sup>3</sup> Proceeding of a Court of Inquiry Held by Order of Henry Gladwin, Commanding at Detroit, 9 August 1763, "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Collections of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, 40 vols. (Lansing: Thorp and Godfrey and Others, 1874-1929), 27: 641. Account verified by Pierre Chesne dit La Butte, Pontiac's French Interpreter, 27: 644-45.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.; de Villiers to d'Abbadie, 1 December 1763, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 13a (Louisiane: Correspondance générale), vol. 43, folio 353-55, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>5</sup> The "third finger" meant the Spanish, who had colonial assets near Louisiana and were on good terms with the French.

<sup>6</sup> Deposition of M. Jordeau at Detroit on 24 December 1763, Sir William Johnson, The Papers of Sir William Johnson, 15 vols. (Albany, NY: University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), 13: 318-19 emphasis original.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.; Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," William and Mary Quarterly 40 (October 1983): 529; Ake Hultkrantz, Conceptions of the Soul Among North American Indians: A Study in Religious Ethnology, (Stockholm: Ethnographic Museum of Sweden, 1953), 326; Emma H. Blair, ed., The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Region of the Great Lakes, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1911), 1: 184-85; Gabriel Sagard, The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons, (New York: n. p., 1939), 208-9; Charles C. Trowbridge, "Meeameer Traditions," University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology Occasional Contributions no. 7 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1938), 34-35; Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1601-1791, 73 vols. (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Bros. Co., 1896-1901. Reprint, New York: Paget Book Company, 1959), 55: 137; Gregory Evans Dowd, "The French King Wakes Up in Detroit: 'Pontiac's War' in Rumor and History," Ethnohistory 37 (1990): 262-64; Abstract of a Plan to Excite a Rebellion in Canada, 1763, John R. Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, (Albany: Weed Parsons and Co., 1857), 10: 1155-57; Projet d'opération pour la Nouvelle Orleans relativement au Canada, 1763, Archives

Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 421, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; Extract, Jenkins to Gladwin, 28 March 1763, Lord Jeffery Amherst, Amherst Papers, Public Record Office, London, (microfilm), reel 31.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Agnes Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy, 1763 (Detroit: Speaker-Hines, 1912), 120.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Milo M. Quaife, The Siege of Detroit in 1763: The Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy and John Rutherford's Narrative of a Captivity, (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1958), 249-51; Court of Inquiry, 5 April 1764, "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Michigan Collections, 27: 662; Abstract of a Plan to Excite a Rebellion in Canada, 1763, Broadhead, Documents of the State of New York, 10: 1155-57; Projet d'opération pour la Nouvelle Orleans relativement au Canada, 1763, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 421; Extract, Jenkins to Gladwin, 28 March 1763, Amherst, Amherst Papers, reel 31; Dowd, "French King Wakes Up," 260.

<sup>13</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 124.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.; "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Michigan Collections, 27: 644-45; Howard H. Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising, 148-49.

<sup>16</sup> "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Michigan Collections, 27: 645.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. See also: Ibid., 27: 644-45.

<sup>18</sup> "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Michigan Collections, 27: 644.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 126; "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Michigan Collections, 27: 644-45; Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising, 148-49; Dowd, "The French King Wakes Up," 265-66.

<sup>25</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 192.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 198; Quaife, The Siege of Detroit in 1763, 249-51; Court of Inquiry, 5 April 1764, "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Michigan Collections, 27: 662; Abstract of a Plan to Excite a Rebellion in Canada, 1763, Broadhead, ed., Documents of the State of New York, 10: 1155-57; Projet d'opération pour la Nouvelle Orleans relativement au Canada, 1763, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 421; Extract, Jenkins to Gladwin, 28 March 1763, Amherst, Amherst Papers, reel 31; Dowd, "French King Wakes Up," 260.

<sup>31</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 198.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* Those "vagabonds" mentioned included among them French and British field agents who became sympathetic to Pontiac. Pierre Chesne dit La Butte, Pontiac's interpreter; Jacques Godfray, French trader; and Major Robert Rogers were among them. The Frenchmen, being traders, sided with the Indians mainly out of personal financial interests. Rogers, having fought Pontiac and his warriors in the Battle of Bloody Run, came over to Pontiac's side after decrying the abhorrent policy initiatives of Lord Jeffrey Amherst. The major believed English officials never fully understood the depth and scope of the Ottawa chief's appeal among the Indians and that Pontiac might have been "serviceable to the British trade and settlements in this country, more extensively so than any one that hath ever been in alliance with us on the continent." All three men were later accused and/or arrested for suspicion of being in league with Pontiac. None were found guilty for the charges were due to their equitable treatment of Indians and Pontiac's

personal affinity for them. Pontiac did follow their advice as well as the original battle plans of the French subsequent to his failed siege of the fort at Detroit. See Robert Rogers, A Concise Account of North America (New York: S. R. Publishers Limited, 1966), 244; Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, 70: 305; Spiesmacher to Johnson, 25 February 1768 and Hay to Johnson, 25 April 1768, Johnson Papers, 12: 450, 480.

<sup>37</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 82, 146, 162-64, 172-76, 192-204, 208-210; Quaife, The Siege of Detroit in 1763, 150-52; R. David Edmunds, The Potawatomi: Keepers of the Fire, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 89; Croghan to Johnson, 24 February 1763, Gage to Johnson, 12 January 1764, Gage to Johnson, 4 March 1764, Johnson Papers, 4: 339, 291, 355.

<sup>38</sup> Burton, ed., Journal of Pontiac, 174.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 82, 146, 162-64, 172-76, 192-204, 208-210; Quaife, The Siege of Detroit in 1763, 150-52; Edmunds, The Potawatomi, 89; Croghan to Johnson, 24 February 1763, Gage to Johnson, 12 January 1764, Gage to Johnson, 4 March 1764, Johnson Papers, 4: 339, 291, 355.

<sup>41</sup> Pontiac to Gladwin, 31 October 1763, Amherst Papers, Public Record Office, London, (microfilm), reel 40.

<sup>42</sup> Mémoire treating Indian affairs in Illinois, 3 October 1763, Deposition of Charlot Casqué, 27 October, 1763, de Villiers to Pontiac, October 1763, Speech of the Iroquois, Loups, and Shawnees..., 9 November 1763, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105, folio 410, 416-18, 447-48, Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>43</sup> Gladwin to Amherst, 28 May 1763, Bouquet to Amherst, 15 July 1763, Gladwin to Moncrieffe, 3 December 1763, Amherst to Bouquet, 29 June 1763, Amherst Papers, Public Record Office, London, (microfilm), reels 32, 33; Bouquet to Hamilton, 12 September 1763, Henry Bouquet, The Papers of Henry Bouquet, edited by S. K. Stevens and others, 15 vols. (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951), 11: 48; James A. Clifton, "Potawatomi Leadership Roles: On Okama and Other Influential Personages," in Papers of the Sixth Algonquin Conference, edited by William Cowan, (Ottawa, Canada: National Museums of Canada, 1975): 42-100; David Baeris, "Chieftainship Among the Potawatomi: An Exploration of Ethnohistoric Methodology," Wisconsin Archaeologist 54 (September 1973): 114-34; George I. Quimby, Jr., "Some Notes On Kinship and Kinship Terminology Among the Potawatomi of the Huron," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters, 25 (1939): 553-63.



<sup>44</sup> A Council in Illinois, Pontiac Addresses de Villiers, 15, 17 April 1764, enclosed in Farmer to Gage, 21 December 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.; Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising, 249-51; Gregory Evans Dowd, "Paths of Resistance: American Indian Religion and the Quest for Unity, 1745-1815," (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 1986), 303-4.

<sup>50</sup> Amherst to Johnson, September 1764, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 568.

<sup>51</sup> Memo, 22 September 1764, Bouquet, Bouquet Papers, 19: 272-73; Gage to Bouquet, 15 October 1764, Michigan Collections, 19: 277.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.; Croghan to Amherst, 30 April 1763, Amherst to Bouquet, 15 May 1763, Bradstreet to Gage, April 1764, Memorandum to Bouquet, n. d., Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 161, 163, 215, 165, 172, 178, 586-87; Gage to Bouquet, 15 October 1764, Gage to Bouquet, 2 September 1764, Bouquet to Gage, 15 November 1764, Michigan Collections, 19: 277, 272-73, 280; Bradstreet to Gage, 28 August 1764, Gage Papers; Amherst to Gage, 17 November 1763, Clarence E. Carter, ed., The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763-1775 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 2: 209-13; Lawrence Henry Gipson, New Responsibilities Within the Enlarged Empire, 1763-1766, vol. 9 of The British Empire Before the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), 105-17.

<sup>53</sup> Two punitive expeditions were launched out of Fort Pitt against those Indians loyal to Pontiac in 1764. One was sent into the northeast led by Henry Bouquet. The other was sent into the northwest led by John Bradstreet. Lord Jeffery Amherst wrote in an undated memo to Bouquet his feeling concerning the purpose of these expeditions stating, "We must Use Every Stratagem in our power to Reduce them [the Indians]." Bouquet responded seeking approval for a two-fold plan wherein smallpox infested blankets would be spread throughout the Indian villages and the "Spanish Method" of using dogs to hunt down Natives would be adopted so as not to place troops in high risk encounters. Both plans were approved by Amherst. The former was carried out, but the latter was scrapped due to the procurement difficulties associated with canines from England. Bouquet ultimately went with a classic military engagement style and was successful in the northeast, though the level of accomplishment owed more to the efforts of Sir

William Johnson and the Iroquois League than the expertise of English commanders. Johnson was well underway with negotiating a peaceful resolution to the conflicts collectively called Pontiac's War. He talked with the northeastern tribes of the coalition, particularly the Senecas and Lenapés, and obtained their acceptance of the British as the new *Onontio*, thus whittling away at Pontiac's base of support with the treaty pen. The Iroquois also enforced Johnson's efforts because they were eager to reign in their rebellious Seneca members as well as subjugate the Lenapés who disregarded the League's claim of domination to follow Pontiac. So, Bouquet's expedition is almost a kind of institutionalized version of the Paxton Boys as they launched a vicious assault on tribes who were already finalizing terms of surrender. Bradstreet's expedition was not successful primarily due to the recalcitrance of Pontiac and his western followers. See: Memorandum to Bouquet, n. d., Bouquet, Bouquet Papers, 19: 161, 215. See also: Indian Congress, 1-28 September 1763, Johnson Papers, 10: 828-55; Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 550, 553-9, 582; Gipson, New Responsibilities, vol. 9 of The British Empire, 108-09.

<sup>54</sup> Bradstreet to Gage, 28 August 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>55</sup> Bradstreet to Gage, April 1764, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 586-87.

<sup>56</sup> Amherst to Johnson, September 1764, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 568; The Address of Turtle's Hart (Heart), 14 June 1763, Bouquet, Bouquet Papers, 19: 203, 208-9; Gipson, New Responsibilities, vol. 9 of The British Empire, 105-17.

<sup>57</sup> Transactions of a Congress held with the Chiefs of the Ottawas, Chappewas, etc., 7 September 1764, Amherst Papers, reel 32.

<sup>58</sup> Johnson to Lords of Trade, September 1764, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 674.

<sup>59</sup> Johnson to Lords of Trade, 30 October 1764, *Ibid.*, 11: 395.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Johnson to Gage, 12 January 1764, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 4: 296. See also Transactions of a Congress held with the Chiefs of the Ottawas, Chappewas, etc., 7 September 1764, Amherst Papers, reel 32; Johnson to Lords of Trade, September 1764, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 674; Amherst to Gage, 17 November 1763, Carter, ed., The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage, 2: 209-13; Gage to Bradstreet, 2 September 1764, 29 September 1764, 4 November 1764, 15 October 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm); Johnson to Gage, 5 August 1764, 1 September 1764, 31 October 1764, 12 January 1764, Gage to Johnson, 2 September

1764, 6 December 1764, Congress with Western Nations, 7-10 September 1764, Johnson Papers, 4: 296, 532-33, 11: 325-26, 395; Gage to Bouquet, Michigan Collections, 19: 270; Gage to Earl of Halifax, 14 April 1764, Johnson to Lords of Trade, 13 November 1763, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 572-81, 655.

<sup>62</sup> Gipson, New Responsibilities, vol. 9 of The British Empire, 122-23.

<sup>63</sup> William Renwick Riddell, ed., "The Last Indian Council of the French at Detroit," Royal Society of Canada: Transactions 25 (1931): 166.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. Captain Thomas Morris assumed Jacques St. Vincent was a French officer based upon his outward appearance. In fact, St. Vincent was only a drummer in the French army before the force was recalled to Louisiana after the Peace of Paris. See Dowd, "The French King Wakes Up," 265.

<sup>66</sup> Antoine Cullierer's brother, Alexis, was arrested for the murder of a young English girl who was the prisoner of Pontiac's band during their retreat to the Maumee River. A trial involving the Cullierer family and Pontiac was conducted by the English at Fort Detroit in 1764. This is discussed in more detail in chapter five of this thesis.

<sup>67</sup> Riddell, "The Last Indian Council," 166-67; Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 32 vols. (Cleveland, OH: Clark Publishers, 1904-1907), 1: 309-10; Dowd, "The French King Wakes Up," 264-66.

<sup>68</sup> Morris to Bradstreet, 31 August 1764, in Bradstreet to Gage, 12 September 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>69</sup> Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 307.

<sup>70</sup> Morris to Bradstreet, 31 August 1764, in Bradstreet to Gage, 12 September 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan. Microfilm.

<sup>71</sup> Captain Thomas Morris was almost killed by a group of drunken Ottawas after they seized the rum his party was carrying. One of Pontiac's French aides stopped a knife wielding warrior from stabbing Morris and Pontiac subsequently took personal care of the English captain for the duration of his stay to insure his safety. See Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 307-308.

<sup>72</sup> Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 310.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 309-10; William L. Stone, The Life and Times of Sir William Johnson, Bart. (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1865), 2: 429-77. On the influence of dreams over the actions of Algonquians see Long's Travels, Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, vol. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Morris to Bradstreet, 31 August 1764, in Bradstreet to Gage, 12 September 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan. Microfilm; Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 307; G. D. Scull, ed., The Montresor Journals, (New York: The New York Historical Society, 1881), 286-87; Morris to Bradstreet, 31 August 1764, in Bradstreet to Gage, 12 September 1764, Gage Papers; St. Ange to D'Abbadie, 9 November 1764, Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), 10: 356-57.

<sup>78</sup> 1 May 1765, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.; Croghan to Johnson, 12 May 1765, Johnson Papers, 11: 736; Intelligence Received from Kayashuta, 9 May 1765, in Croghan to Gage, 12 May 1765, Murray to Gage, 12 May 1765, Intelligence Received from Neoland, 15 July 1765, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm); Croghan's Journal, 1, 29-30 April 1765, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 10: 4, 7-8; Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 290-95.

<sup>80</sup> Gage to Earl of Halifax, 14 April 1764, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 619-20.

<sup>81</sup> Gage to Bouquet, 7 December 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan. Microfilm.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Johnson to Gage, 2 July 1764, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 11: 249-50.

<sup>84</sup> Croghan to Amherst, April 1764, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 568.

<sup>85</sup> Croghan to Johnson, November 1765, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 10: 290.

<sup>86</sup> Saint Ange to D'Abbadie, 15 July, 1764, *Ibid.*, 10: 290.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*; Gage to Earl of Halifax, 14 April 1764, Croghan to Amherst, April 1764, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 568, 619-20; Gage to Bouquet, 7 December 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm); Johnson to Gage, 2 July 1764, Johnson Papers, 11: 249-50; Croghan to Johnson, November 1765, Journal of d'Abbadie, 20 December 1764, de Villiers to d'Abbadie, 20 April 1764, de Villiers to Loftus, 20 April 1764, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 10: 242, 244, 290; Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1: 309; White, Middle Ground, 295-96.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION—LONELIER THAN GOD: POST-WAR FACTIONALISM AND PONTIAC'S DEMISE

Sir William Johnson intended to use the Algonquins as administrators of English will in the west just as the Iroquois League had been used for the same purpose in the east, but this triggered the first of three dynamics working against the broad appeal of Pontiac. Johnson underestimated the indignation of the Iroquois as a result of this plan to establish favorable relations with their Algonquin enemies. Under Johnson, British laws had been enforced utilizing the Iroquois League as policemen. Being the largest confederacy of tribes in the region they wielded the greatest military power and thus commanded the greatest respect among the numerous peoples of the northeast. The tribal members were eventually steered into supporting their British comrades by a combination of events and the work of Sir William Johnson during the Seven Years' War and the resultant treaties at Niagara between the Senecas, Lenapés, Shawnees, and the British Crown were attributable to the combined use of British graciousness and Iroquois threat. The Senecas had previously broken away from their fellow Iroquois to side with Pontiac's efforts in addressing English encroachment. But after Pontiac's sieges were lifted, Johnson treated with the Senecas and found them quite amicable as the other Iroquois members threatened reprisals as a consequence of insubordination in tribal secession. But now the reconstituted League, continuing as Johnson's enforcers, took as

an insult the plan to establish a similar system in the western Great Lakes under Pontiac's Algonquins, as he had done successfully with the Iroquois in the eastern lands. Johnson was forced to soothe the Iroquois' sensitive egos, costing him valuable time and presents, just to keep the situation in the New York region from erupting as it had in the Ohio Valley.<sup>1</sup>

The second internal factor working against Pontiac's retaining control of a unified Indian front was most critical since it tore away the spiritual foundation of his ascension. In 1765 Neolin approached George Croghan and said the Master of Life had visited the Lenapé prophet again, giving a new direction to his Indian children. Whether the prophet meant the Indians strayed from the Great Spirit's plan and were being forced to suffer the ramifications of sin by accommodating the British or the new vision was merely a refinement of the old based upon Pontiac's inability to attain a decisive victory is unclear. What is evident from the Lenapé's words, though, is that Christian missionaries were finally having an influence upon the Native prophet's soul. Neolin told Croghan "our Great Father [God] allows us to know his will and in what manner we ought to proceed in order to make a firm and lasting Friendship between one another, and the persons amongst the White people to whom we are to Speak to on this head, by order of our Father, are the Quakers."<sup>2</sup> Again, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Neolin's vision because the statement speaks directly from Lenapé tribal experiences. The prophet began expressing considerable interest in the Christian religion at this time, especially to Quaker missionaries, as a result of his self-described spiritual growth. The Quakers' theology had a phenomenological element ingrained in its practice so Neolin and the missionaries were finding many religious commonalties through which to communicate.

Clearly Neolin was becoming more engrossed with heavenly affairs than mundane concerns. Furthermore, the Society of Friends demonstrated their kindness toward the Indians of the Pennsylvania region during the rampage of the Paxton Boys,<sup>3</sup> harboring defenseless Natives who ran from the onslaught of English colonial rage. Harkening back to when Neolin first provided his vision as a sort of reformation of Lenapé theology, the prophet's new message also bore distinct parallels with that of Papounhan and his syncretism of Christian and Algonquin beliefs. The old tribal divisions were reemerging as the theology Neolin fostered gave up on its leader who had likewise lost his political focus. The temporal struggles led Pontiac astray and consumed his spiritual foundation as well as his diplomatic patience.<sup>4</sup>

This interpretation of a renewal of old tribal tensions between accommodation and tradition is given further validity in the final dynamic working against Johnson's desire to seize upon Pontiac's ascended state, that being a resolute nativist rival to the Ottawa chief named Charlot Kaské. Like Papounhan's theological compliment before the rise of Pontiac, Kaské appears quite similar to the Lenapé nativist Wangomen. Kaské was himself a living contradiction and contested with his opponent for Indian favor. The son of a German father and Shawnee mother, Kaské was raised as a Catholic Indian, married to an English captive, and was more stridently opposed to a British presence upon the North American continent than Pontiac was at this juncture. Certainly, Pontiac had not evolved into anything close to the accommodating stance of Neolin, but neither was Pontiac willing to instigate a fight with the English crown as Kaské was. The Ottawa chief was aware that his efforts reduced England's ability to launch any major offensive and secured for him valuable diplomatic room within which he could continue



to negotiate an acceptable political settlement, even if his spiritual luster was diminishing. So, the Ottawa *Okama* found himself remaining in the center of diplomatic and cultural affairs as a result of the circumstances shifting around him. Lord Jeffrey Amherst and Sir William Johnson served as contrasts within the crown's approach in handling Indian affairs. Kaské and Neolin mirrored the English policy makers by polarizing the Indian coalition over how to handle European relations. And Pontiac, despite his former militancy and continued personal aversion toward the British, became the appointed intercessor between all these disputing parties. The remnants of the Ottawa chief's prestige were still enough to reconstruct at least a tenuous version of the old covenant chain.<sup>5</sup>

The French, whose Louisiana Territory Charles Philippe Aubry now governed, were aware of Pontiac's hospitable mood and attempted to assist the British representative, George Croghan, in his efforts to speak to the Ottawa chief. They corrected the false English perception of Kaské being a minion of Pontiac, ignored the Shawnee nativist's demands for supplies, and instead asked both Croghan and Pontiac to come to Fort de Chartres to begin talks for a formal peace. Besides, his friends, de Villiers and Croghan, were the officials who requested his presence. Plus, French officials were shoving Kaské away in New Orleans while Pontiac was being drawn closer into *Onontio's* favor. All of this prompted Pontiac to accept the invitation.<sup>6</sup>

A potentially disastrous incident prior to the convention at Fort de Chartres illustrates Pontiac's continued prominence and is indicative of his remaining status. Lieutenant Alexander Fraser, an English officer, was detached from his post at Fort Pitt to link up with Croghan in the Illinois Territory in order to provide the agent with a

military escort along his journey. Fraser, ill advised, left too early. While near his destination of Fort de Chartres, Pontiac and a band of his followers confronted the lieutenant's men and purportedly wanted to seize them as captives. But during their subsequent talk at the fort, Pontiac explained to the Englishman his perception was "not to be viewed as [Fraser] supposed" and that his men only acted with the "good motive" of protecting the officer "from accident, because being with me [Pontiac] he would be insulted by no one."<sup>7</sup> Pontiac's words were true. Kaské was aware of the approach of the English emissaries and had spies looking for Fraser and Croghan so that he might seize them and use them for bargaining purposes. Pontiac was winning the trust of the European representatives and was also hoping to retain much of the prestige that was being taken from him by Kaské's more extreme positions. And maintaining an open dialog between he and the European officials kept French and English attention on the Ottawa chief and held the interest of the Indians by offering them a choice in leadership.<sup>8</sup>

At the conference, Pontiac tentatively accepted a peace-belt offered him by Fraser on behalf of Johnson, mainly because the Lenapés, eastern Shawnees, and reconstituted Iroquois had already agreed to peace. He also found solace in the revived good graces of his French Father. Pontiac stated his belief that the French governor "restored peace to all these children [the Indians and English]."<sup>9</sup> He added that "for the future we will regard the English as brothers, since you [his French Father] wish to make us all one."<sup>10</sup> He then accepted another invitation to return to the fort and meet with George Croghan.<sup>11</sup> Fraser received confirmation of Pontiac's continued influence from some Illinois tribes with whom the Ottawa enjoyed some influence. Pontiac dispatched belts of peace to enlist the tribes in a "common cause" to work out a settlement with the British in the

Pontiac was now completely immersed in the political circumstance of his era and was transformed into an advocate for British occupation. Johnson was aware that Pontiac's influence had a direct correlation to those "favours" and "honours" which the *Okama* could spread among his people.<sup>18</sup> Supplies of both good quality and quantity were transferred to the Ottawa chief so that he might fulfill his reciprocal obligations. Johnson even contributed to the *Okama*'s status by utilizing the French custom of bestowing medals upon the chief with whom the Crown's favor rested. These tribal leaders adorned themselves with these symbols of friendship and used them for charismatic and political purposes. Finally, Pontiac received a payment of ten shillings per day for his services to the Crown, a sum equivalent to that of a captain in the British regular army.<sup>19</sup>

The Ottawa chief's powerful position was not only apparent in financial transactions but also in sensitive legal matters of the post-war era. The killing of a seven-year-old girl, Betty Fisher, pitted the English administration against the French Cuillerier family and their son, Alexis Cuillerier, who stood accused of the crime.<sup>20</sup> Pontiac was placed at the center of the controversy because the Frenchman was a partisan of the Ottawa chief and claimed that he was only following Pontiac's orders in drowning the little girl in the Maumee River. A summons was presented to Pontiac and he testified through his interpreter. The English examiner, Jehu Hay, reminded Pontiac during the questioning that all wartime actions were excused and that if he committed the murder he was not accountable. Realizing this, Pontiac tailored his testimony to coincide with that of the Frenchman's in an effort to demonstrate his loyalty to *Onontio*'s fellow children. But the chief's interpreter as well as a group of English eyewitnesses told Hay that

Pontiac's original testimony, that Alexis Cuillerier drowned the child for unknown reasons, was the accurate version of events. The English examiner believed them and wanted the interpreter to remain at the fort until crown officials could conduct a formal trial and sentencing so that he could testify. The Indian interpreter did not want to stay and when British authorities attempted to confine him he escaped into the Illinois Territory. When asked if he knew of his former interpreter's whereabouts, Pontiac stated that he did not. Hay believed that the interpreter's flight had to do with a threat from the Cuillerier family and became more determined to see the Frenchman prosecuted. Clearly this event shows Pontiac's diplomatic importance to the English. They were prepared to ignore an act of murder even if the chief admitted it. The life of Alexis Cuillerier was, from the outset of the investigation, inconsequential so long as British policy moved ahead as planned. And when Cuillerier's main accuser ran from his obligation to testify, the British officials merely shifted the responsibility for the act over to the Crown's French scapegoat. Nothing was to alter England's designed use of Pontiac's prominence to aid their desire to control the Great Lakes region.<sup>21</sup>

When the time came for Pontiac to acquiesce to British authority formally and offer Johnson the *Onontio* status he coveted, the Ottawa chief spoke the proper words, but his support of the policy had as much to do with his own frustration as it had to do with his genuine affinity for Croghan or Johnson. He explained, "I have no complaint whatever against the English," rather it was his own "young men who have shamed me."<sup>22</sup> Fellow Ottawas were then berated. "It is solely against my own nation that I am offended, by the several insults they have made me, saying that I was never chief. I have replied to them, 'You are chiefs like me; make arrangements to command the village. As

for me, I am leaving it.”<sup>23</sup> This sarcastic remark was due to developments during the period of Pontiac’s waning charisma. Chalot Kaské’s extreme rhetoric was painting the Ottawa chief as an imposter turned traitor. Several times Pontiac’s own Ottawas beat him to the ground, even prompting Croghan to record that the “Indians are very jealous of pondiac & want to Chuse another Chief they think we make to much of him.”<sup>24</sup> Pontiac explained that he was retiring to the Illinois country near his French Father as well as his Indian relatives. He assured Johnson that he would “always hold fast to your [Johnson’s] hand... which I have accepted and which is proof that I have never acted to perpetrate any bad affairs.”<sup>25</sup> The *Okama* related that his words and promises were binding for him as well as for Johnson because of their mutual acceptance of “a belt and twist of tobacco.”<sup>26</sup> Pontiac had herein formally bestowed upon Johnson the almost sacred status of *Onontio*. His final obligation fulfilled, Pontiac sought retirement from the central position that had proven so costly to his followers as well as himself. But Pontiac’s influence over Euro-Indian affairs was not quite over.<sup>27</sup>

The last act of importance of Pontiac in Euro-Indian affairs was found in the events surrounding his death. Sometime in late 1768 one of Kaské’s loyal chiefs quarreled with the Ottawa in the woods of the Illinois Territory. Pontiac pulled a knife and reminded all of the nativists that he still enjoyed considerable status among Indian peoples despite his desire to recede into the faceless obscurity of the Illinois forests. Pontiac stabbed a disagreeable Peoria leader, called Makatachinga or Black Dog, killing him. The dispute remained a constant source of agitation during the years of conflict between Pontiac and Kaské, even prompting one French official to remark that “Pondiac would be killed in less than a year, if the English took so much notice of him.”<sup>28</sup> Rumors

spread of vengeance awaiting Pontiac when he did not anticipate it. The Peorias discussed an assassination plot in their council, eventually acting upon it. On April 20, 1769 Pontiac was in the town of Cahokia doing some business in a French store. He was unarmed and alone except for a young Peoria who accompanied him throughout his journeys that day. Pontiac had no reason to suspect any malice from his associate, but as the two left the store the Peoria warrior struck the Ottawa over the head with a club, drew a knife, then plunged the blade into the chief's side so deep that it killed him almost instantly. In the wake of the assassination more reprisals resulted, indicating to Pontiac's continued high esteem amongst many Native tribes. Virtually every nation formerly adhering to Pontiac sang war songs in their councils and the Peorias sought munitions from the French for their own self-protection.<sup>29</sup>

Nothing of great consequence materialized in the wake of Pontiac's murder, but the subtle reverberations spoke to his remaining prestige. Charlot Kaské descended into great disfavor in the absence of a political rival and stained by the Ottawa chief's blood his followers had spilled. Six Kaskaskias, who were allied to the Peorias, were found dead and scalped, the handiwork of Sac and Fox warriors loyal to the slain Ottawa chief. Symbolically and historically, Pontiac's fame lingered among the many peoples that comprised his coalition.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, Pontiac was granted a final resting place, accompanied with full Ottawa and Catholic rites, among the French he claimed as his brothers. The priest who conducted the funeral, Father Meurin, used a commoners' cemetery somewhere within the present-day city of St. Louis, Missouri. No further burials were allowed at the location out of respect for *Onontio's* Ottawa son, Pontiac.<sup>31</sup>

What remains paramount in any discussion of this time or region in North America are perceptions. Historians often do not care to admit that what people perceive to be true shapes their actions, which in turn shapes larger events. This point is particularly salient in diplomatic activities across cultures. At the close of the Seven Years' War, England was struggling to expand its empire in the New World while France was merely trying to salvage whatever remained of its colonial assets. But what each European power realized was that the real concern dictating their aspirations and subsequent policies was the original owners of the land they coveted. There were no easy solutions. Despite their best efforts to marginalize Native concerns and manipulate the customs of those tribes in the critical Great Lakes region, Indian culture thrived especially when mastered by an *Okama* adept at the diplomatic rituals of Europeans. Just as French and British social realities receive proper consideration within historical debates, historians are remiss in ignoring the realities of Indian societies that are also a part of the diplomatic shadowplay. It cannot be denied, for a period of time in America's history that in every correspondence, on every set of lips, one name became a part of every language in the early Northwest: Pontiac. And just as it was in the writings of white officials in the eighteenth century, the writings of white historians of the twentieth century find the name of Pontiac incessantly repeating itself. For scholars who refuse to admit the centrality the name Pontiac in the historiography of early westward expansion, the fact remains that they are still invoking his name in the process, thereby tacitly confirming his centrality.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Imperial Control of Indian Affairs, 10 July 1764, Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), 10: 279; Johnson to Gage, 19 February 1764, 16 March 1764, Indian Conference, 24 March-23 April 1764, Sir William Johnson, The Papers of Sir William Johnson, 15 vols. (Albany, NY: University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), 4: 331, 368, 11: 134-59; Treaty...with Delawares, 5 May 1765, John R. Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, (Albany: Weed Parsons and Co., 1857), 7: 740.

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Transactions with the Indians at Fort Pitt, quoted in Gregory Evans Dowd, "Paths of Resistance: American Indian Religion and the Quest for Unity, 1745-1815," (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 1986), 305.

<sup>3</sup> The Paxton Boys were a group of riotous English colonists in Pennsylvania who carried out a brutal rampage upon the Natives of Lancaster County in late 1763. Given all of the hostilities resulting from Pontiac's activities and the sporadic acts of violence throughout the frontier, the Paxton Boys sought to resolve the Indian question in their immediate area by simply killing every Indian they found. What makes their conduct outrageous in this era of war was that they did not distinguish between tribes allied to England and those allied to France. Furthermore, most of the victims of this assault were "praying Indians" who had converted to Christianity, particularly Quakerism, and were thus no threat as well as being predominantly pacifists. The English rioters failure to take into account these political and religious considerations troubled many crown officials and colonial leaders. When entire villages were destroyed and even Quaker settlements, where the missionaries were harboring converted Indians, were raided in order to seize and kill every Native enemy, Pennsylvania official, Benjamin Franklin, attempted to resolve the conflict. His solution was directed specifically at Pontiac and his activities. Franklin got the Paxton rioters to agree to stop killing those Indians loyal to England while giving them the freedom to kill any other Natives deemed pro-French or even neutral. See Carl Waldman, Atlas of the North American Indian (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1985), 108-9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 304-6; Charles Hunter, "The Delaware Nativist Revival of the Mid-Eighteenth Century," Ethnohistory 18 (Winter 1971): 42.

<sup>5</sup> Fraser to Gage, 15 May 1765, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm); Déposition du nommé Charlot sauvage français, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Series C 11a (Canada: Correspondance générale, lettres reçues des Colonies), vol. 105 Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; Charles Hunter, "Delaware Revival," 42.



<sup>6</sup> Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 286.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of Council, enclosed in St. Ange's letter to Gage, 28 April 1765, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.; Ross to Farmer, 25 May 1765, 26 May 1765, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 10: 481-83; Declaration of Hugh Crawford, 22 July 1765, in Gage to Halifax, 10 August 1765, Fraser to Gage, 27 April 1765, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of Council, enclosed in St. Ange's letter to Gage, 28 April 1765, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan. Microfilm.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Croghan's departure was delayed at Fort Pitt due to difficulties encountered with Shawnees and Lenapés in negotiations he was conducting. The tribes refused to provide escorts for his journey to the Illinois Territory. Croghan's desire to have Indian protectors proved a valid concern as he departed for the region later. A band of Charlot Kaské's Wabash followers attacked Croghan's group killing three Shawnee chiefs. When the Wabash councils heard of who it was they assaulted they feared retaliation on the part of a British-Indian alliance and quickly sought out British officials to make restitution. Coincidentally, this aided Pontiac's primacy in that those Indians assaulted were the Ottawa chief's former coalition members. They still respected Pontiac as an *Okama*, hence the reason they accompanied the British on this trip to talk with the Ottawa leader. Croghan used the Wabash Indians' fear to place them under Pontiac's control, thus what the Ottawa chief ultimately decided with the Indian agent determined the fate of the Wabash villages. The Wabash became some of Pontiac's strongest advocates as he sought a peaceful resolution. See Gage to Halifax, 27 April 1765, Croghan to Johnson, 12 July 1765, Johnson Papers, 4: 731, 11: 838; Croghan to McKee, 3 August 1765, in Reid to Gage, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm); Croghan's Journal, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 11: 32-33, 36, 43.

<sup>12</sup> Extrait de la lettre de M. de St. Ange... a M. D'abbadie, enclosure a D'Abbadie to Gage, 16 August 1764, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>13</sup> Fraser to Gage, 27 April 1765, Ibid.; Gage to Halifax, 27 April 1765, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 4: 731; Fraser to Gage, 15, 18, 26 May 1765, 17 June 1765, Fraser to Campbell, 17 May 1765, 20 May 1765, Croghan's Journal, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 10: 491-97, 515-16, 519; 11: 30-52; Capucin to Campau, 7 June 1765, Extract of Letter from Fraser, 18 May 1765, McKee to Johnson, 12 August 1765, Johnson Papers, 4: 764-66, 11: 743-44, 884.

<sup>14</sup> Proceedings of Johnson with the Ohio Indians, 9 July 1765, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 754.

<sup>15</sup> Croghan to Lords of Trade, 8 June, 1764, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 10: 262-63.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson to Peters, 30 January 1766, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 5: 22.

<sup>17</sup> Journal, 1765, Howard to Johnson, 24 June 1765, Johnson to Gage, 30 January, 1766, Indian Proceedings, 10 November 1764, *Ibid.*, 5: 20; 11: 457-58, 807, 820; Proceedings of Johnson with the Ohio Indians, 9 July 1765, Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 4: 469-501, 7: 754; Croghan to Lords of Trade, 8 June, 1764, Plan for Imperial Control of Indian Affairs, 10 July 1764, Johnson to Lords of Trade, 8 October 1764, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 10: 262-63, 276-77, 331-32; White, Middle Ground, 305-14.

<sup>18</sup> Johnson to Lords of Trade, 8 October 1764, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 10: 331.

<sup>19</sup> Plan for Imperial Control of Indian Affairs, 10 July 1764, Johnson to Lords of Trade, 8 October 1764, *Ibid.*, 10: 276-77, 331-32; Broadhead, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 7: 754; Journal, 1765, Howard to Johnson, 24 June 1765, Johnson to Gage, 30 January, 1766, Indian Proceedings, 10 November 1764, Roberts to Johnson, 3 June 1766, McLeod to Johnson, 4 August 1766, Johnson Papers, 2: 279, 5: 20, 279, 11: 457-58, 807, 820.

<sup>20</sup> Betty Fisher was a captive of Pontiac since the outset of hostilities in 1763. He kept the girl with him and whether he had adopted her is unclear. As she was not dead and noting that adoption of especially young European children acquired in war was a common practice among Great Lakes peoples this was most likely the case. During Pontiac's retreat after the failed siege of Detroit, the child became ill with dysentery. A friend of the Cuilleriers, John Malet, testified that he witnessed the girl, after soiling herself, approaching Pontiac's fire to get warm. The Ottawa chief proceeded to grab the girl and plunge her into the nearby river. Pontiac's testimony conceded to all of these facts and the cultural trait of the Algonquins not spanking children but rather tossing them into cold water to chastise them would also bolster this version of events. But Pontiac maintained that he did not proceed to drown Betty. Rather, Alexis Cuillerier jumped into the water and held the girl below the surface for reasons known only to him. Malet and Cuillerier asserted that Pontiac challenged his French follower stating, "You bragged of your courage. Show me now if you are a man or not," then ordered the drowning of the child. See: Malet's Accusation, 4 August 1767, Gage, Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan. Microfilm; Johnson, Johnson Papers, 5: 673; Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1601-1791, (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Bros. Co., 1896-1901. Reprint, New York: Paget

Book Company, 1959), 5: 153; Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," William and Mary Quarterly 40 (October 1983): 529.

<sup>21</sup> Malet's Accusation, 4 August 1767, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm); Johnson Papers, 5: 673; Howard H. Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising (New York: Russell and Russell, 1970), 301-4.

<sup>22</sup> Enclosed in Turnbull's letter to Gage, 14 June 1768, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Roberts to Johnson, 23 June 1766, Johnson Papers, 5: 279.

<sup>25</sup> Enclosed in Turnbull's letter to Gage, 14 June 1768, Gage Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan, (microfilm).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> MacLeod to Johnson, 4 August 1766, Johnson, Johnson Papers, 12: 150.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Blouin's Mémoire, 1771, Gage, Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan. Microfilm; Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising, 309-18.

<sup>30</sup> It is still difficult to trace Pontiac's lineage because of many tribal claims that were placed upon the war chief after his demise. Howard H. Peckham has a good discussion of the difficulties involved. The significant problems involved are the matrilineal tradition and close association of the Three Fires Council. Its members, the Ottawas, Ojibways, and Potawatomis, were tightly constituted and frequently intermarried to keep their bonds strong. Tradition maintains that Pontiac was the son of an Ottawa father and Ojibway mother. The patrilineal Europeans thus proclaim him an Ottawa by birth. Complications arise from the matrilineal designation of Pontiac being Ojibway by birth and the Jesuits, who carefully attempted to respect tribal traditions, corroborate this fact by referring to Pontiac as an Ojibway. Cultural considerations and Pontiac's self-identification only exacerbate this tangled past. Pontiac became an *Okama* for a band of Ottawas and proclaimed himself a member of this tribal group, so the question remains how one wishes to define an individual's ancestry. Being that the Three Fires Council was so tightly constructed that their distinctions become rather marginal, the debate over Pontiac's heritage is interesting to discuss but practically moot. See Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising, 15-19; Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, 10: 328, 69: 283; 70: 305, 317, 71: 260, 288.

<sup>31</sup> Daniel Blouin's Memoire, 1771, Gage, Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan. Microfilm; Letter from Father Meurin, 14 June 1769, Alvord and Carter, eds., Illinois Historical Collections, 16: 556; Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising, 309-18.

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